

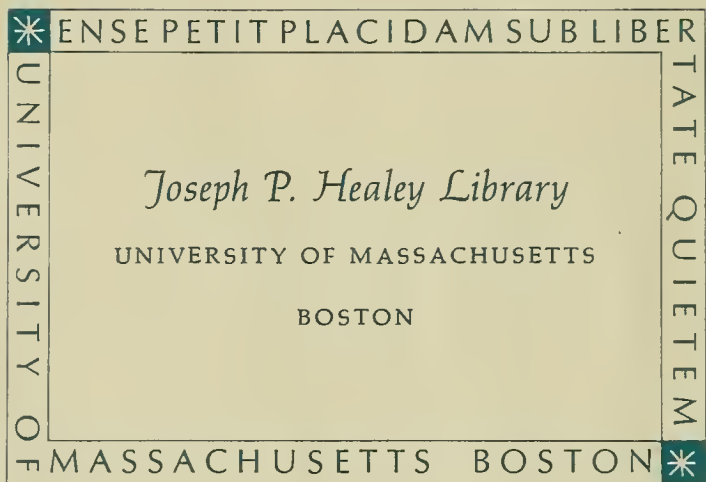
# ***Youth Employment and Unemployment***

*Outreach Initiatives in Massachusetts  
and the City of Boston*

James E. Blackwell  
with the assistance of William S. Stracqualursi  
and Zaki A. Sakin

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and the City of Boston**

**By**

**James E. Blackwell**

**University of Massachusetts/Boston**

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## PREFACE

This study of youth employment and unemployment in the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is designed to assemble information concerning the types of outreach initiatives already in place which address this gigantic problem. Although more than 100 providers or agencies in Metropolitan Boston offer a broad range of services, the constraints of this project limited the analysis to a relatively small number of programs and agencies operating under state, city or private auspices.

The author is deeply indebted to his two research assistants for their devotion to this project. William J. Stracqualursi took copious notes on the majority of the interviews of state and city officials and private agency directors or representatives to help authenticate those taken by the author. He also interviewed several recently employed youth whose experiences are described in various parts of this document. Zaki A. Sakin also interviewed the majority of the young people whose voices are heard in the descriptions of young workers given. His knowledge of Spanish resulted in the inclusion of some youngsters who were more comfortable speaking that language.

Numerous persons generously consented to give their time and important suggestions for understanding the scope or magnitude of the youth employment outreach initiatives delineated in this document. They are: State Representative Sandra Graham, Kristin McCormack, Denise Dodds, Sara Smyth, Catherine Dunham, James Darr, Jose Perez, Jane Morrison, Larry Dwyer, Maria Grigorieff, Cecelia Riviera-Casale, Joseph Deery, Robert Vinson, Judith Meyers, Connie Williams, Rick Murphy, Patricia Pickett, Henry Smith, Carol McCarthy, Ken Barnes, David Dance, Elaine Gross, Robert Handy, Jerry Fahey, William Spring, Richard Lawrence, Harold Jones, Brian Connely, Andrea Washington, and Tony Perkins.






Special appreciation is expressed to the William Monroe Trotter Institute and its Director, Dr. Wornie Reed, for financial and staff support of this project. Anne Foxx is commended for her special diligence in typing this manuscript. Finally, I wish to express deep gratitude to Myrt, my wife, whose support is constant and whose critiques are always invaluable.

James E. Blackwell

August 1987



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## INTRODUCTION: THE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

In the midst of an apparent economic recovery from the disastrous national recession of 1981-1983 are millions of Americans who have been left out and whose economic conditions have worsened. These individuals cannot accept public pronouncements that jobs are plentiful and quite available for any person seriously pursuing work. Their personal experiences dispute such assertions for they are members of that legion of jobless, unemployed, under-employed, discouraged and homeless men, women, and teenagers all across the United States whom this nation too often neglects and the more prosperous among us sometimes blame for their own untoward economic status or condition. The "economically locked out" are uniformly unimpressed by governmental reports of declining unemployment and poverty rates or accounts of increasing labor market participation among Americans when they are continually unsuccessful in their job searches, no matter how hard and frequently they try, or when they are compelled to line up at one of the growing number of soup kitchens for a single meal per day, or to obtain a night's lodging at a shelter for the homeless.

These are the Americans who sometimes raise rhetorical questions that actually beg direct answers: "Why is it, with all this prosperity and economic recovery that the federal government and some governors talk about, that I do not feel happy about my own economic situation?" "Why can't I find a job even when I am living in a state that likes to boast full employment?" "Why am I homeless in a country that likes to boast of the availability of adequate housing for all its citizens?" "Why am I hungry in a country that produces more food products than any other nation in the world?" "Why, if I found a job, I cannot be guaranteed a



decent wage?" These questions are not only important for adult citizens, they have a special salience for youth in the United States.

Despite pockets of apparent prosperity in various sections of the country, there is a major economic crisis in the United States. This crisis is especially visible among the youth population. It is one that is bound to worsen without substantively more effective intervention through sound outreach initiatives that emanate from enlightened, effective youth employment policies. Although this problem is prevalent among all population groups, certain groups and geographic sections are disproportionately affected. For instance, minorities as a group carry a heavier burden of being "minorities" in a society that has yet to extricate itself from the stifling yoke of institutional racism and race-based discrimination in the labor market.

Yet, in the Summer of 1986, one could walk down the streets of Boston and of many of its suburbs and be continually struck by the numerous "Help Wanted" signs in windows of business establishments. Observing those signs alone without a more penetrating analysis of eligibility for jobs could readily lead one to conclude that "anyone" who wants a job can find work in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the issue is much more complex. Without question, job expansion in Boston and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, reached perhaps unprecedented levels during the middle 1980s. That fact is not in dispute. What is highly debatable is the degree to which opportunities for permanent jobs and for long-term participation in the labor force are available for young people across all segments of the population. It is certainly arguable as to whether or not such opportunities are known or even attainable by all segments of the population.

Objectives of Study. An effort is made here to identify trends in the labor market participation of teenagers, especially in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and in the City of Boston; to specify unemployment trends in terms







of the racial identification of teenagers or youth, with a special focus on the 14-19 year old cohort; to describe the types of jobs held by teenagers and make an assessment of the long-term implications of types of employment for future employability; to specify the most frequently identified issues\* delineated when attempting to address the problem of youth unemployment; to permit young employed people to speak about their own feelings, sentiments and attitudes about active participation in the labor force and what the participation actually means to them; and to describe in detail some of the outreach initiatives and intervention strategies offered at the state, city and private sector levels that address the fundamental issue of how to move increasingly larger numbers of young people into the labor force in ways that enable them to achieve income sufficiency as productive citizens. The purpose of this report is not to evaluate programs. Rather, it is designed to inform the reader of what is currently in place to address the youth labor market participation and unemployment problem, and to suggest areas where expanded intervention is imperative.

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\* In brief, they are as follows: (1) youth and the changing labor market, (2) racial inequality in the labor market, (3) factors affecting employment or cause of youth unemployment, (4) education and types of jobs attained by youth, (5) effects of job change and unemployment on young workers, (8) the military as an option to civilian unemployment, (9) effects of in-school work on youth) (10) importance of training for employment (11) intervention strategies, and (12) youth employment policy needs. Several sub-sets of issues are revealed in each of the twelve major issue areas.



## SALIENT ISSUES ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

For purposes of expediency, it is useful to bifurcate issues which frame the debate on youth employment and unemployment into (1) a national level, as reflected in a review of pertinent literature, and (2) a state or local level as viewed through the eyes of legislators, providers, and practitioners. In so doing, the similarities and differences between these two sets of actors may be revealed.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Issues in the Literature

#### on Youth Unemployment\*

\*\*\*\*\*

A review of the pertinent literature on youth employment, unemployment and labor market participation during the 1980s reveals twelve issues that dominate research endeavors.

In general, research on youth and the changing labor market focuses attention on demands of changing labor markets (e.g., a shift from a market dominated by jobs in the manufacturing sector to those dominated by high technology industry and by service sector needs); skills required to meet the demands of technological innovations; the roles and responsibilities of school systems to train and prepare young people for a changing labor market and its requirements for higher order skills than demanded by other economic structures; the relationship between

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\*For a more detailed literature review, the reader is directed to the companion volume, Youth and Jobs: A Bibliography of Publications, 1980-1986 With Selected Annotations. It provides an annotated bibliography of references cited in this section.





geographic location and participation in the labor market; labor market competition among youth, the effects of unions on labor market participation, transition into the labor market from youth to adulthood, and labor market involvement as related to educational attainment. Anderson (1986) provides evidence to show that major differences exist between Blacks, whites and Asians in high school preparation that prepares them for a new job market oriented toward high technology. Arguing that there is a "clear linkage" between educational preparation and inclusion in the labor market, he, like Harris (1983), calls for better preparation among Blacks in order to improve their success rate for employment in the new labor market. Earlier studies (Freeman and Wise, 1982; Grant and Hammermesh 1981) showed that the earnings prospects of young workers are endangered by the competition from larger numbers of white women entering the labor market. Additional insights into the requirements of labor market participation in the 1980s and beyond are also offered.

For instance, Freeman and Wise (1982) provide support for the argument that while the employability of young people varies across geographic areas in the United States, Blacks are still more likely to encounter difficulties in finding employment, irrespective of the area of residence. It has been argued that low wages impede job search and acceptance by Black youth. In general support of this argument, Holzer (1986) maintains that Blacks report higher "reservation wages" (the lowest amount of money considered acceptable) than do whites. In turn, higher reservation wages among Blacks contributes to the duration of their unemployment. In an earlier study, Holzer (1982) had demonstrated that Blacks are excluded from higher paying union jobs, in comparison to whites, which, in turn contributes significantly to their higher unemployment rates and, by inference, to lower wages among Blacks. Finally, Stevenson (1982) and Young (1985) argue for





sustained youth experience in the labor market as a facilitator for smoother transition into the adult work world.

The argument that racial inequality in the labor market has a negative impact on the employment opportunities for Blacks and other minorities is supported by any number of researchers including Barton, et al. (1985), Becker and Hills (1980); Blau and Kahn (1980); Holzer (1986); O'Neill (1983) and Shapiro (1984).

Barton and associates (1985) analyzed data which showed that out-of-school whites and Hispanics receive greater employment opportunities and higher earnings than do Blacks. Becker and Hills (1980) provided evidence to show that Black adults pay a much heavier price than non-Blacks as a result of prolonged teenage unemployment experience. However, in a later study (1983), these researchers maintained that the "scarring effects" of youth unemployment are often overstated. On the other hand, Blau and Kahn assert that when young Blacks are employed, they are less inclined to quit their jobs than are white teenagers. Further, Borus (1982) showed that Black youths are more (emphasis added) willing than white youths to work at menial jobs, and that there is a considerable amount of sex stereotyping with respect to types of jobs women and men are willing to accept.

O'Neill's (1983) data analysis led him to conclude that the widening gap between Black and white teenage unemployment cannot be attributed to industrial and geographic relocation. It must be explained by other factors and, even when Blacks are participants in the labor market, it is Shapiro's (1984) contention, based upon significant empirical data, that white young men have "a premium" in wages received over those received by Blacks. In effect, this set of studies reveals the persistence of the race variable as an impediment to equal access to the labor market as well as to fairness in the distribution of wages across racial lines.



As previously suggested, youth unemployment is associated with many causal or contributing factors. Several studies (Monthly Labor Review, 105 1982; Freeman and Holzer, 1985, 1986; Holzer, 1982, 1986; Hinckley, 1981; Kiker and Condon, 1981; Lewin-Epstein, 1985; Morse, 1981; Richardson, 1982; Hahn, 1985; Osterman, 1980; and Santos, 1985) conclude that specific characteristics are associated with youth unemployment. These contributing factors include lower scholastic achievement, certain socio-economic and family background variables, such as family employment and income status, nepotism, and motivation; lack of job vacancy information, structural defects in the U.S. political and economic systems, and poorly financed governmental programs. With respect to the labor force participation rates of Blacks and Hispanics, Santos (1985) observed that their attitudes toward work, and aspirations for high status occupations, especially among Hispanic youth, help to explain their position in the world of work.

Observing a "deepening crisis of Black youth unemployment," Freeman and Holzer (1986) noted that the position of Black youth in the labor force can be attributed to such social and economic factors as "local labor market conditions," discrimination among employers, unattractive jobs, competition from a growing female labor force, frequent economic downturns, and the increasing utilization of criminal behavior as an alternative to or as a response to unemployment. Hinckley (1981) called attention to the role of racism in keeping Black youth out of the labor force; while Lewis-Epstein emphasized racism and discrimination in the basic infrastructure as a contributing factor to Black teenage unemployment. Specifically, when analyzing a cross-sectional sample of industrial and commercial businesses, Lewis-Epstein showed that racial segregation affects the decision to locate a business in predominantly Black neighborhoods. In turn, such decisions have a negative impact on the employment of Black youth. Importantly, Morse (1981) constructed a model for estimating youth unemployment by race. A major finding





of his research was that it is the failure to complete high school that is more detrimental to Blacks than whites in the attainment of a job. As will be elaborated in a subsequent section, in the city of Boston and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this enormously high drop-out rate or the volume of school-leavers, especially among Blacks and Hispanic youngsters, is a matter of urgent concern since dropouts have an unemployment rate that is 23 percent higher than that of high school graduates (Vidson, 1986).

Another contributing factor to youth unemployment already suggested in the previous section combines education and the types of jobs either desired or attained. Anderson (1986) maintains that all too many teenagers are woefully unprepared or have inadequate training for the types of jobs available in a shifting economy. Educational training, the possession of basic skills, high educational attainment (i.e., high school completion and beyond), and ability to handle complex problems -- all -- foster job acquisition. Lack of educational attainment and related attributes tend to relegate young people to service jobs, to retail and cashiers work, lower-level clerical work, maintenance and food service work, and manual labor. In turn, types of jobs obviously determine not only levels of salaries or wages but opportunities for upward mobility in the labor market. There is substantial evidence to show that young people need clear job information that enables them to make "informed career choices," (Green, 1981) and opportunities for employment in jobs that are not boring but which provide them with a challenge and socialize them into formal expectations of the world of work. Otherwise, not only are they likely to seek frequent job changes but they will experience prolonged period of unemployment.

However, the net effect of job changes on their adult wages can be positive for teenagers irrespective of their race. Becker and Hills (1983) examined such long range effects of job changes and related labor market experiences of male





teenagers and reported positive outcomes. This finding is essentially supported in studies by Borus (1982), Butler and Mangum (1982), Freeman (1986) and Smith (1985). A critical issue to be considered is the time lapse between job changes. If the time lapse between jobs results in prolonged periods of unemployment the effects of that unemployment are likely to be negative for teenagers who want to be in the labor market.

Donovan and Oddy (1982), Calvin (1981) Furnham (1985), Jackson et al (1983) and Viney (1983) are among a plethora of researchers who have explored the social-psychological consequences of unemployment on young people. The common thread in their conclusions is that the effects are substantially more pronounced for school-leavers or drop-outs than on those who have completed at least a high school education. Even so, prolonged unemployment produces a high degree of depression, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, a diminution of a sense of psychological well-being, and great distress. There is some support for the notion of a close relationship between criminal behavior and unstable economic conditions among some teenagers.

Among options open to young people are: remain in school and complete at least a high school education but obtain work experience while in school, or to enlist in the military as a means of alleviating civilian unemployment. Views on these options are far from uniform. Studies by Santos (1985) and Sherraden (1981) show that military service is deliberately selected by a significant number of teenagers who are unsuccessful in obtaining meaningful employment. That option is increasingly the choice made by the economically disadvantaged irrespective of race, and was especially evident during the 1981-83 economic recession. Military service does, in fact, provide some enlistees with sufficient occupational training, skills and educational experiences that will enable them to be more marketable as participants in the labor force once returned to civilian life.



Whether or not high school students should have gainful employment during the school year is contested by school officials, some policy-makers in industry, and by some educational researchers. Kornblum and Williams (1981) assert that the problem for many youngsters is the transition "from street to training;" and not so much the transition from school to work. They demonstrate the value of in-school part-time work as an inducement to staying in school and becoming better prepared for the world of work after graduation. This view is shared by proponents, for example, of the Boston Compact and the Private Industry Council in Boston. By contrast, Greenberger (1983) argues against proposals to increase the number of hours in-school teenagers should be permitted to work and efforts to extend the school night curfew. In her view, working long hours is detrimental to schooling, to family life, and is associated with substance abuse. This debate is further framed in terms of (1) a need to respond to some of the economic conditions of students who require financial assistance for basic sustenance; (2) student' desires for continued work experiences beyond summer employment; (3) the possibilities that in-school work experiences can assure continued employment in the same setting after graduation and facilitate access to higher education as opposed to the situation of students who work only to satisfy a desire for unnecessary but popular consumer goods. However, as Castillo (1980) points out, competing conclusions may be drawn from the research with respect to the impact of work-in-school experiences on academic achievement, educational enhancement, and reductions in "household financial tensions."

Another issue of importance concerns the effects of the minimum wage and child labor laws on youth employment and unemployment. Some researchers conclude that changes in the minimum wage do result in higher unemployment among youth, especially minority youth between the ages of 16-19 (Betsey and Dunson, 1981; Solon, 1985. Brown and Associates (1983) claim that increasing the





federal minimum wage by ten percent will reduce the unemployment rate of 16-19 year olds by approximately one percent. In his re-examination of Brown's data, Solon (1985) concluded that increases in the minimum wage actually decrease teenage employment. Ehrenberg and Marcus (1982) insist that the findings on this matter are at best inconclusive. For example, they showed that minimum wage legislation induces teenagers from low-income families to reduce schooling whereas youngsters from high income families actually increase their levels of educational attainment and presumably become more marketable with higher subsequent wages. Hashimoto (1982) continues the debate by asserting that the effect of a minimum wage on training for white males is negative and that an increased minimum wage in a competitive market may under certain circumstances lead to increased employment. A 1987 study by F. Gerard Adams further disputes claims that increases in the minimum wage result in substantial job loss and a negative impact on the economy. This study sponsored by the Economic Policy Institute provided evidence to show that teenage employment would be impacted significantly by "market forces" and demographic trends reflecting "shortages of youthful low-skill workers" and that raising the minimum wage (from \$3.35 to \$4.65 per hour., as Senator Edward Kennedy proposes) would not jeopardize jobs for youth (Globe Washington Bureau, 1987).

Numerous researchers conclude that the current crisis in teenage unemployment can only be addressed by training opportunities that ultimately lead to employment Becker and Holl, 1983; Blau and Kahn, 1981; Bresnick, 1983; Lefkowitz, 1982; and Stone, 1981, and by the implementation of workable intervention strategies for the right target groups and at the right time (Freeman and Wise, 1982; Goggins, 1982; Green, 1980; and Waldinger, 1985). There is also consensus at literally every level that a coherent youth employment policy is imperative in order to alleviate a youth unemployment situation that has exploded





into crisis proportions in many parts of the country and among certain segments of the population (Bresnick, 1983, 1984; Carter, 1980; Freeman and Holzer, 1985; Greenberger, 1983; Katz, 1981; Lowenstein, 1985; Moss, 1982; Osterman, 1980; and Sherraden, 1984). Constructing a coherent youth employment policy does not appear to have high priority in the United States. What is evident is that this country has an unusually high tolerance for youth unemployment and social neglect of its youth in comparison to other industrialized nations.

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### Issues In Youth Employment:

#### State and Local Levels

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Although the youth employment issues identified at the national level are also duplicated at the state and city levels in Massachusetts, some problems are not only as telling but, moreso than others, they dominate discussion and programmatic action. The interviews conducted for this report revealed that legislators, policy-makers, government officials, providers and the employed teenagers themselves focus special attention on the following concerns:

1. the impact of the changing economy on job opportunities for teenagers,
2. racial inequality in the marketplace,
3. factors and conditions related to the unemployment of Black and Hispanic teenagers,
4. problems in the educational system that affect preparation of youngsters for the world of work,
5. attitudes of teenagers themselves toward work, and
6. decreased funding for youth employment training programs



The Massachusetts economy is undergoing phenomenal growth and profound changes during the 1980s. Its robust character has become the envy of other sections of the United States. The highly publicized prosperity of the State's residents is reflected in a reported statewide unemployment level that has been at or below the 4.0 percent level since 1985, the availability of so many jobs that attract non-residents to the state, the escalating costs of housing, the increasing cost of living and the unprecedented construction boom in Boston. Advances in high technology and the dominance of Massachusetts in this field have also contributed to this mushrooming economy.

However, as Robert Vinson, Director of Field Services Research for the Massachusetts Department of Employment Security, pointed out during an interview in 1986, structural changes in the Massachusetts economy have not been without a negative impact on some segments of the population. One consequence of this changing economy has been a massive shift in the location of jobs. In turn, this shift has created demands for different kinds of training and occupational skills. Today, over 80% of all jobs in Massachusetts require at least a high school diploma, compared to 66% in 1970 (Opportunity for All). Available jobs throughout the State, and especially in Eastern Massachusetts, are primarily in the service industry, high technology and in the professional-managerial categories. Vinson stated that while some forty percent of all workers in the Commonwealth are employed in professional-managerial positions, the service sector actually has the highest concentration of college graduates. The service sector encompasses such sub-sectors as health, education, business services, hotel, retail and trade, and maintenance. Between 1975 and 1986 jobs in business services alone increased from 7,000 to 30,000. By contrast, in one year, between 1985 and 1986, some 20,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the State. The nondurable sector is rapidly shrinking as a job source for persons seeking full-time employment. Non-





manufacturing jobs accounted for about 90 percent of job growth in Massachusetts, the equivalent of 600,000 new jobs between 1977 and 1985 (Opportunity For All).

Massachusetts provides a textbook illustration of a split/dual labor market characterized by a bifurcation of occupations into higher level managerial and professional jobs supported by persons holding jobs in a lower tier service sector. This structural arrangement has enormous implications for persons lacking in training to meet the requirements of upper tier occupations as well as for those persons who, by virtue of race, ethnicity or gender, occupy unfavored or lower social status and are subject to discrimination or restricted access to the upper tier positions. Hence, relatively untrained minority youth are in a position to be victimized by that lack of educational training as well as by the fact of their minority status. It is argued that the economic boom experienced in Boston and in other parts of the State has not been and is not now uniformly shared by Blacks and Hispanics (Blackwell, 1985). This position is based upon racial disparities in job attainment and the distribution of salaries and wages across racial lines.

In mid-1986, considerable attention to the unemployment rate among Blacks was noted in the Boston press. It was reported that, despite this booming economy in Massachusetts, the unemployment rate among Black adults was as high as 20 percent while that for Black teenagers was as high as 48 percent (Jordan, 1986). At the same time, officials from the Division of Employment Security (DES) reported that Blacks and Hispanics were being "slowly pulled into the mainstream," and according to their records, the unemployment rate for these groups was substantially lower than reported in the press. Privately, some DES officials expressed special concern about the relatively minute sample size upon which DES statistics were based and that with such a huge margin of error the unemployment rate among Blacks and Hispanics could be significantly higher than reported officially by the DES (Jordan, 1986). State Representative Gloria Fox (D.-Roxbury)





informed the Boston Globe in May 1986 that her sources supported the 20 percent adult and 48 percent youth unemployment rate in the Black population. She also claimed that the figures on Black unemployment in Springfield, Worcester, Lowell, and other urban areas of the State approximated those observed for Boston (Jordan, 1986). The persistence of such staggering unemployment rates provides a strong rationale for the argument that prosperity in Massachusetts is a highly selective, race-and-class-based phenomenon.

It must be recognized that reports on employment-unemployment rates depend heavily upon the quality of the data sets utilized and analyses of a sample size sufficient to generate a low margin of error in the statistics emerging from those analyses or interpretation of the data used. Further, as noted by Vinson, a distinction should be made between "unemployment" and "joblessness." In his view, to be classified as "unemployed," two criteria must be met. First, the person has to be immediately available for a job; second, the person must have looked for a job during the previous four weeks. On the other hand, "joblessness" means that one simply does not have a job. Further, the pool of 16-19 year olds in the State has dropped by 40,000 since 1981, and is still falling. The distinction notwithstanding, Blacks and Latinos have not fully shared in this economic boom. They, moreso than other groups, feel the untoward conditions of economic deprivation. What counts to a jobless or unemployed Black or Latino in Boston, Springfield or Lawrence is the fact of not having a job while wanting to be employed. One cannot dismiss the fact that even while proclamations are made about the widespread prevalence of jobs in the State and the lowest unemployment rate among the eleven industrialized states of the nation, thousands of persons are, indeed, either left out completely or are not satisfied with their present economic condition.

During the Summer of 1986, the Marriott Hotel advertised 450 job openings and 4,000 applicants showed up. Jerry Green, Assistant Director of the Roxbury Area



Planning Action Council (APAC) informed Robert Jordan during an interview for a Boston Globe article that his APAC had 1,000 applicants for some 279 summer jobs (Jordan, 1986). At almost the same time, this writer was informed by a DES official that "Young people's opportunities are only limited by their imagination to find a job." The sentiment expressed by that official that jobs are there if young people merely applied for them was shared by a great number of people in 1986. Yet, as elaborated in other sections of this document, the situation is considerably more complex than using one's imagination.





## TEENAGE-EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Given the reservations expressed about data sets and the disparities in the statistics reported by diverse sources, the reader can only be reminded of such disputes. Nevertheless, heavy reliance on data generated by such sources as the Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and the DES is commonplace. In this section, utilization of data from these sources will foster understanding of labor force participation and unemployment/joblessness trends.

The data presented in tables 1 and 2 reveal a decreasing absolute number of 16-19 year olds participating in the labor force, an increase in the number actually employed since the recession of 1981-83, and a decline in the absolute number of unemployed teens in Massachusetts. In table 2, it is shown that while, the overall teen unemployment rate has steadily declined at the national level since 1983, the drop in teenage unemployment has been much more dramatic in Massachusetts. For instance, the national rate fell from 22.4 percent in 1983 to 18.6 percent in 1985. By contrast, the teenage unemployment rate in Massachusetts was almost halved between its 17.4 percent in 1983 to its 9.5 percent in 1985.

In both tables, the racial disparities in youth unemployment are immediately observable. At the national level, the Black youth unemployment rate almost triples that of white teens and is almost double that of Hispanic youth. Similarly, the Hispanic teen unemployment rate is not only significantly higher than that of white teens but about one-quarter of all Hispanic teens in the nation are unemployed. The unemployment burden borne by Black youth is further manifested in Massachusetts statistics. In Table 2, it is shown that even though the black youth unemployment rate is less than half that of black teen unemployment at the national level, in



Table 1. Labor Force Participation of Massachusetts Teens

Year	(Number in Thousands)		
	Number in Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed
1981	260	219	41
1982	248	195	53
1983	248	205	43
1984	239	216	23
1985	243	220	22.9
1986	233	211	22.0
1987	225	206	18.8

Source: Youth Employment Trends in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Division of Employment Security, The Center for Labor Market Studies, May/June 1985), p. 4.



Table 2. Teenage Unemployment Rates in the U. S. and in Massachusetts by Race and Percent (16-19 year olds)

Year	U.S.				Massachusetts			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	
1981	19.6	17.3	41.4	24.0	16.1	?	?	?
1982	23.2	21.1	46.2	21.4	21.0	36.9	?	?
1983	22.4	19.3	48.5	28.4	17.4	9.6	30.5	54.3
1984	18.9	15.5	40.1	9.6	9.3	14.3	15.4	?
1985	18.6	15.7	41.0	24.3	9.4	9.2	14.3	15.4
1986	18.3	15.6	39.3	9.5	9.1	19.7	7.5	?
1987*	18.1	15.5	36.5	8.4**	8.1	17.6	12.7	?

\*As of May 1987

\*\*As of July 1987

Source: Youth Employment Trends in Massachusetts (Massachusetts Division of Employment Security, The Center for Labor Market Studies, May/June 1985), p. 4.





Massachusetts it remains significantly higher than that reported for white teens. This type of statistic supports positions advanced by legislators such as State Representatives Gloria Fox and Sandra Graham that the economic boom in Massachusetts is passing by Blacks and Latino young people. Nevertheless, Vinson cautions that the image of the unemployed teens as young males hanging out on the street is a widespread but much distorted picture. He claims that (as of 1984) of the 16,000 unemployed teens in the State, three-fourths are women, reflecting the problem of teenage pregnancy. But he also maintains that the majority of the teen unemployed are concentrated in the central cities of Boston and Springfield and that 70 percent of the unemployed teens in the State are poor Blacks, many of whom have dropped out of school.

Data provided by the Division of Employment Security (DES) support findings drawn from various national longitudinal studies which show that teen unemployment rates are correlated with family/parental income, ethnic identification, years of schooling and gender. For example, in Massachusetts, irrespective of race, a teenager from a low income family is less likely to be an active participant in the labor force than is a teen from families above the poverty line. Economically disadvantaged Blacks and Hispanics, however, are still significantly more likely to remain outside the labor market than are the economically disadvantaged whites (Youth Unemployment Trends in Massachusetts, 1985:3-17). This situation has some long-term implications since disadvantaged economic status is associated with fewer opportunities for work experience and less earning capacity (Youth Unemployment Trends in Massachusetts 1985). The problem of these youth is further exacerbated by their greater tendency to drop-out before completion of a high school education. In Boston in 1986, it was reported that about 43 percent (roughly 3,000 youngsters) dropped out before attaining a high school diploma. Statewide data showed that only about 60 percent of the Black high school drop-



outs were in the labor force at the time of the report. This statistic means that Black drop-outs are almost four times as likely as non-Black dropouts to be outside the labor force. The probability that a female dropout is likely to be unemployed is about 4:1 to a male drop-out (Youth Unemployment Trends in Massachusetts, 1985). Even though such findings point to the high incidence of teenage pregnancy as an impediment to labor force participation, one cannot be sanguine about the racial disparity in labor force participation rates of Black and Hispanic males.

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### Factors Associated With Teenage Unemployment

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When one searches for explanations to account for the higher incidence of teenage unemployment among Blacks and Hispanics, it is important to also focus attention on the power of the race variable as a major determinant of that condition.

Without question, many disadvantaged white youth have found it difficult to obtain jobs either "in-school," "after school" or during the Summer months. But, the problems of minority youth are much more serious. One explanation for this disparity lies in the fact that white youth have an expanded network into the labor market structure. It is a kind of brokering network that is steeped in the advantages of nepotism and the role of unions as gatekeepers to the marketplace which locks out Blacks and Latinos. In unionized jobs carrying an apprenticeship structure as the principle avenue for entry, it is still more difficult for young Blacks and Hispanics to break down institutionalized opposition to them. The impact of the newly created Boston Employment Commission, which received Boston City Council approval with





union endorsement in August 1986, has yet to be realized. However, this commission, with union participation, may be able to open up job opportunities for previously excluded or underutilized BLACK and Hispanic teenagers and adults.

The racism and discrimination experienced by adults from minority groups in obtaining employment in Massachusetts have serious implications for labor force participation of teenage minorities. Too few minority men and women occupy managerial and professional positions and too few are employed in other decision-making capacities that would enable them to influence hiring, retention and promotion policies in either the public or private sectors. Hence, Blacks and Latinos find it extremely difficult to point to role models from their own groups whom they would like to emulate in the marketplace or individuals from those groups who can serve as visible success stories, as one counselor put it, or inspirations, or as objective evidence of the probabilities of economic success if they followed normative guidelines and traditional routes to economic success. Instead, despite the prevalence of many white persons who will not discriminate on racial or ethnic grounds, Black and Latino youngsters report "Doors slammed in their faces" by white employers. Some Black and Latino youngsters insist that because so many white employers are from the middle and upper classes, live in suburban communities, and have no familiarity with life in central cities, they are insensitive to the work needs of minority group teens.

Perhaps, nowhere is this insensitivity more immediately recognizable than in the attitudes of many white employers toward young males from minority groups, especially attitudes toward the Black male teenager. Interviews conducted during the Summer of 1986 of Black and white decision-makers revealed that the fear of the Black male teenager is widespread throughout metropolitan areas in Massachusetts. Informants offered several explanations for this fear and suspicion. It was suggested that Black males are the victims of a panoply of stereotypes



encompassing their presumed uncontrolled sexuality, hostility, aggressiveness and other negative character traits. The reluctance of many white employers to "take a chance" with young Black males is rooted in the "Black male as rapist mentality," the Black male as mugger and thief mentality, "and" the Black male as a threat mentality." This distorted image includes the belief among many that "Black males hang out a lot"; "they don't want to do anything but have fun 'break' dancing"; "they are physically and verbally abusive; have no sense of responsibility; are unreliable and not particularly dependable." There are those who claim that Black male teens cannot communicate properly with white employers and that the activists among them are identified as trouble makers subject to dismissal as soon as possible if, indeed, they are ever employed. Some informants stated that some white employers who hold such distorted perceptions of the young Black male firmly believe the stereotypes to be true but rationalize this construction by the belief that Black male youngsters are more prone to abuse controlled substances. Prejudiced employers have little difficulty in embracing such myths and, like stereotypes in general, the slightest bit of evidence to support the generalization is confirmatory of their intrinsic truth. Behavior to the contrary is regarded as "exceptions" rather than evidence to negate prevailing stereotypes.

It is this reluctance to hire young minority teens that enables several job counselors interviewed for this study to conclude that many white companies who send representatives to job fairs, for instance, have no real commitment to the hiring of minority teens. On the other hand, these companies seem to be interested in kids who project the "clean-cut" image they wish to promote. They are not especially interested in youngsters who do not conform to that standard, based largely upon personal appearance (often a euphemism for race) and language even when the minority youngster is genuinely interested in the job. Subjective evaluations are made of individuals based upon distorted perceptions or images





rooted in a gap between the culture, race or class of the employer or employer representatives and the youth applying for work. These youngsters are then handicapped by race and class biases. Negative experiences in the world of work, in the job search, and in the attitudes of employers toward them often engender discouragement, disillusionment and resignation among many young Blacks and Latinos. Unfortunately, such encounters also encourage some youngsters to use discrimination as a rationalization for their own inadequate preparation or inability to match their own aspirations with the special needs of an employer.

This lack of preparation for labor market participation is viewed by many informants in this study as a serious indictment of the public school system, especially the Boston Public School System. The fact of the matter is that employers are reluctant to hire people who cannot communicate with their clientele, who are functionally illiterate, who do not possess reasonable computational skills, and who do not have an appreciation for acceptable interpersonal behavior important for particular jobs. The school system is often regarded as the primary culprit for these inadequacies. Critics point to the enormous drop-out rate, which some refer to as a push-out rate, among Black and Latino students; the number of pupils who fail to be promoted each year; the number of youngsters who cannot read at normal grade level; the number of problem kids in school; and the failure of school systems to deal with disinterested teachers as evidence of the failure of the system. By the same token, many of these critics applaud such programs as The Boston Compact (which will be discussed in a subsequent section) because of the evidence it provides of successful ventures between the school system and private industry for enabling youngsters to obtain "in-school" employment, summer jobs and the encouragement to complete secondary education.

Nevertheless, there is a continuing tension between those who advocate education versus those who are proponents of training and who promote work





while "in-school." Critics of such programs as The Boston Compact and other contractual arrangements argue that these programs are bound to succeed because they have "creamed off the top" among youngsters who are most likely to succeed anyway. It is asserted that contracts are "performance-driven money that must demonstrate success in order to survive." This requirement influences the selection of participants for "in-school" employment and/or training programs in such a way as to eliminate the "hard-to-reach" kid "who is at "greatest risk." Hence, most employment/training programs are ill-equipped to deal with or provide the kinds of services needed by the largest number of youngsters--that 70 percent or more who reside in the central cities, who are in greatest needs for successful intervention. Income criteria, for example, may also screen out a huge segment of youngsters in need of immediate assistance.

This tension is further reflected in questions concerning the appropriateness of sending youngsters to work before completing a high school education, or in what is the appropriate context of an educational program as opposed to a training program, or what is the most effective strategy for easing the transition from school to work, or what is the appropriate role of the school (system) in relationship to an employment-training program. There are persons who maintain that functions must be separated and clearly defined. Others are committed to interactions between education and work if the total needs (service, educational and employment) are to be met. Some critics of educational, training and employment programs call attention to the paucity of Black and Latino persons in positions central to effective delivery of needed services. They raise serious questions about racial disparity in the number of directors, recruiters, placement counselors, and other actors in training programs. It is alleged that too often agencies do not recruit in communities where "kids at risk" are more likely to reside, and that too many white recruiters are afraid to venture into central city communities heavily



populated by Blacks and Latinos and an insufficient number of Black and Latino recruiters are ever hired.

This situation reduces the probability that Black and Latino teens will learn about those jobs that are available or about training opportunities open to them. Consequently, many teenagers, including economically disadvantaged whites, have not learned how to look for a job and are victimized by, among other things, a problem of poor dissemination of information, and weak outreach strategies. Everyone must share the responsibilities for such barriers to youth employment, including the federal government that has not only reduced appropriations for youth employment and training programs as it devolved such responsibilities to the States, but whose guidelines on monies severely restrict job opportunities and entrepreneurial development in Black and Latino communities.

The youth unemployment problem is further exacerbated by weaknesses in the infrastructure of minority communities. As Representative Sandra Graham (D. Cambridge) stressed, "It is necessary to look at the economic stability of one's community when examining the employment profile." She maintains that economic stability of the Black community, for instance, is not strengthened when Black businesses cannot obtain sufficient capital to thrive and employ other Blacks in the same manner as other minorities have done throughout American history. The banks and insurance companies that refuse to capitalize businesses or to insure them help to undermine their viability as economic enterprises. Often, minority contractors in Massachusetts have experienced so many barriers to obtaining lucrative contracts that they have relocated when better opportunities arise. The loss of minority businesses in minority communities decreases job opportunities for minority youngsters. In addition to this problem is the dearth of such ventures as fast-food chains in which work experience "in-school" or "after-school" or during the summer could be realized. The absence of this type of business means that





youngsters from minority neighborhoods must travel to neighborhoods they may define as alien or hostile if they wish to obtain either work experience or a job needed to help support themselves and members of their families. They may be hesitant to do so due in fear of their own safety, their lack of affordable transportation, lack of familiarity with the new environment, or because of feelings of insularity.

The church is an important component of the institutional infra-structure in terms of facilitating movement into the marketplace of minority youngsters. As Representative Sandra Graham states, "the church has a responsibility to deal with employment issues and to become much more concerned about social services or what happens to family members either after services on Sunday or among those who never attend them." From her viewpoint, the church can provide an important referral function for agencies attempting to reach out to young people. The church can use its leverage in assisting young people to gain access to employment training and educational programs. Further, ministers may devote some sections of their sermons to address the impact of racism on employment and articulate strategies for breaking down barriers of racism in the marketplace. The church can be a powerful and persuasive force for promoting educational attainment among minority youth so that they can better understand the efficacy of formal education as an escape route from poverty and untoward economic conditions.

"It's not what kids are doing but  
the circumstances under which they are doing it."

Larry Dwyer, Director  
Boston Community Schools

The attitudes young people develop and convey can also be an impediments to their successful movement into the work of work. Schools have been criticized for



failures to inculcate proper values about work into the personality construct of many youngsters. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the inculcation of values is not the responsibility of schools alone. Other socializing agencies share in this function and should also take leadership in developing acceptable attitudinal systems. While thousands of youngsters have internalized an appropriate work ethic evidenced in positive attitudes about the value of work which they bring into the marketplace, far too many, in the view of informants in this study, are lacking acceptable work habits or an acceptable orientation toward work. In addition to schools, some informants claim that the kind of socialization these youngsters experience in their neighborhoods, the lack of positive role models to reinforce acceptable standards of behavior, and pervasive adult unemployment in their communities combine to nurture socially unacceptable attitudes, norms and behaviors as well as disillusionment and a strong sense of fatalism about future prospects.

Some informants stated that many youngsters become frustrated by the low pay in available jobs and are lured by lucrative monetary rewards by participation in the underground economy. Some youngsters may respond to certain job opportunities with the assertion: "Why should I work as a dishwasher making \$5 bucks an hour when I can be a look-out with a pair of binoculars and make \$220 a day?" Some may feel that "It is beneath them to work at McDonalds or Burger King grilling burgers when they can be more independent with shorter hours and make substantially more money in the underground economy?" For these young people, "risk of being arrested as a look-out is not an issue." The consequences of getting caught are not an issue. Short-range, immediate gratification or pleasure is the major concern.

Having said that, it is imperative to emphasize the fact that the overwhelming majority of minority youth want to find employment in the legitimate marketplace



and to be law-abiding participants in the standard labor force. But, as one counselor reported, a staggering proportion of poor Black, Latino and white teenagers have a deep sense of hopelessness, despair and fear that they will never "make it in the system." Yet, they want to try. They want to have that opportunity to learn and to work if only they were given that chance. They want to believe that "there is something in it for them" when they work hard and abide by the social norms and the work ethic but they are discouraged when the necessary support systems are not available and when the socially disorganizing consequences of adult unemployment are so visible in their immediate neighborhoods. It is because of that need (for viable support systems) that intervention strategies and outreach initiatives achieve a special significance in attacking the problem of youth unemployment in the city of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.





## VOICES OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

An informal survey of attitudes and experiences of unemployed youth in Boston was conducted by two members of this project during the Summer of 1986. Interviews were obtained from participants in the Jobs For Youth Program (JFY), Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) and the Boston Youth Clean-up Corps (BYCC) directed by the Boston Community Schools. JFY participants were interviewed at the JFY headquarters on Stuart Street in downtown Boston. ABCD participants were interviewed at the Mario Umana Harbor School (Harborside Community School) in Charlestown, and at ABCD offices in Charlestown, Jamaica Plain and Dorchester. BYCC youth were interviewed at work sites in Roxbury, Upham's Corner, and Charlestown. Forty-eight persons participated in the survey.

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### Characteristics of Participants

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Twenty-six (54.2 percent) of the participants were male and 22 or 45.8 percent were female. More than half (25 or 52 percent) were Black; 13 or 27 percent were white, and 8 or 17 percent were Latino. The participants were about evenly divided between those who lived with a single parent and those who lived with both parents. Twenty-three or (48 percent) resided with the mother only (in two cases, the father was deceased) whereas 21 or 44 percent lived in a two-parent family. The remaining four persons either resided in a separate household or lived with other siblings. Because of the focus of this project, not unexpectedly, all but one of the participants were under the age of twenty. In fact, 23 (48 percent) were between



the ages of 14 and 15 while more than half (N = 25 or 52 percent) were between the ages of 16 and 19. Only one person had reached the age of 20.

While six persons were currently unemployed, twenty-eight or 58 percent had some previous work experience and twenty (42 percent) were involved in their first job activity. Employed persons were working in the following types of jobs: office work (including answering the telephone, typing, filing, receptionist-clerk); messenger; day care; counseling; maintenance; teacher's aide; food service; and in neighborhood clean-up programs.

Persons who had had previous work experience had been employed almost exclusively in some form of service work that paid minimum wages or no more than \$4.00 to \$6.50 per hour (three persons). Job categories included the following:

1. unpaid volunteer day camp counseling
2. telephone interviewing
3. sales in Filene's Basement
4. day care
5. baby-sitting
6. junior counselor for ABCD
7. supermarket (bagging, stock-boy)
8. paper boy
9. Boston Garden assistant (undefined)
10. produce packing plant packer
11. general maintenance
12. general laborer
13. cashier
14. beauty parlor assistant
15. short order cook.
16. painter for ABCD
17. door-to-door sales
18. messenger
19. metal fabricator products plant
20. fast food service (e.g., Burger King, McDonald's)
21. food service (waiter)
22. carpentry assistant
23. donut shop
24. groundskeeper
25. nursing home cook
26. landscaping
27. construction work
28. housekeeper
29. dishwasher
30. mail clerk in an office





The interviewer asked questions in the following areas: (1) attitudes toward working; (2) feelings of being unemployed, (3) sources of money before employment; (4) attitudes of their friends who were currently unemployed; (5) plans for their current wages; and (6) future prospects. Each interview was from 20 to 45 minutes in length. Among the unemployed persons and individuals who had had previous work experience were several high school drop-outs. In retrospect, these individuals wished they had completed a high school diploma and some were seeking a G.E.D. certificate in order to enhance their probability of job attainment. Their reasons for dropping out varied; however, the following excerpts from their experiences reveal several commonalities:

A 17 year old male reported that he dropped out at age 15 and in the 9th grade. He had been violent in school and stated that he was disrespectful to teachers who chastised him for involvement in fights and his physical assaults on other students. He explained his behavior in this way: "They were picking on me. They were not teaching me what I was supposed to be learning. I never got the help I wanted. I knew I could do better but it wasn't getting into my head. I used to go on a rampage."

This person was dismissed from school for theft. He also believes that the schools (in Boston) are "in bad shape, everyone skips classes." in his view, these problems are "the fault of teachers who don't maintain their attention." He also stated that he wants a G.E.D. so that he can enlist in the military: service and "become a better man."



An 18 year old male reported that he dropped out of school "due to conflicts in school." He stated that "people disliked me because I was actually from Boston but I was going to school in Cambridge and I was smart." He also feels that the Boston schools cause many problems for young people. In his view: "You hang around so and so; then you get the street mentality in you. Then you say (expletive deleted) this, and "bump" that... I'm going to, going to do this or that." Finally, in desperation, he believes many young people "simply leave the schools to get rid of the hassle."

A third high school drop-out was a 19 year old male. He reported dropping out of school "because of problems with people at school, and to save me from coming back and hurting somebody. I got into quite a few fights. it wasn't the school work. I love school work. It was basically that I had a quick temper. People were bothering me."

The remaining persons who had dropped out of school reported that they "were kicked out" for disciplinary problems, or left home because parents "were too restrictive" or there were other problems in either the school or at home. In every case, a decision to withdraw from school or the fact that they were expelled was regretted by these participants.



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## Feelings of Being

### Unemployed

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Irrespective of age, sex, race or parental status, as determined from remarks of participants in this survey, "being unemployed is not a happy experience'." Boredom and depression are commonly shared feelings:

A 19 year old female from Jamaica Plain stated that: "I am happier when I have a job because I have something to look forward to when I wake up in the morning... things to do, and places to go. When I don't have a job it's like just sitting around the house and being bored..."

An 18 year old male from Dorchester stated: "I was living with my girlfriend, laying around the house all the time watching soap operas. I kept saying to myself 'I, can't do this. My girlfriend is at work. I'm just laying here watching soap operas. This is not me!' I felt like I wasn't where I belonged. I wanted to work (because I liked) the experience at ABCD. You know, I liked the money in my pocket and I like to work and make friends. So, I was laying there. I started to listening to the radio. They announced Jobs For Youth. I had dropped out of school... Get a chance you know to start out again on my own two feet. I called them. So, they gave me a time to come in... I'm just looking for the right person. If I could train under the right person, I'll make my grade. This place has helped me a lot."





A 19 year old female from Roxbury had these feelings about being unemployed: "Well, when I'm not working, I feel depressed, like nobody.. like I mean what am I doing out here just sitting around? I don't like that. I feel depressed when I'm not working. I feel much better when I am.. It doesn't bother some people not to work. But, it bothers me!"

Lack of independence is also felt:

An 18 year old male from Charlestown stated that when not working "I just had to ask my mother all the time for money. I couldn't really buy the stuff that I wanted to buy and the things I wanted to do."

A 16 year old male from Charlestown reported that when not working, "I just wanted a job when I couldn't have one. My age, I couldn't get one... It was kind of depressing 'cause my friends had jobs."

Another 15 year old Charlestown male stated that without a job, "I didn't have that much money. My father is unemployed and my mother's money goes straight to direct deposit."

And a 16 year old Charlestown male reported that when he did not have a job he would "get mad a lot at my brothers and sisters because I have to depend on them."



A 19 year old Charlestown female said that when she did not have a job "I went to the beach a lot and just hung around but I didn't have any money. Couldn't really do the things I wanted to -- go out to the movies and stuff like that -- unless I borrowed the money... I wasn't independent."

A 15 year old Dorchester female stated "not having a job is having nothing to do. If you ain't gonna have a job, you ain't gonna do nuthin."

A 15 year old Jamaica Plain male stated that: "When one has no work, one wants to do something. But when one is at home, bored, with nothing to do, then that's bad."

An 18 year old Jamaica Plain male reported that "When I didn't work, I wanted to. It was terrible. I was in there watching TV, wishing for something that I didn't have. I didn't have the initiative to do it. I really didn't care about myself at the time. I guess I was in a state of depression, and when you're depressed, you don't care. I just kept wishing for something to happen when I should have been out there looking for something for myself. That was my fault."

A 14 year old Jamaica Plain male said life without work was "boring. Really boring! Nothing to do. I couldn't wait to get old enough to work so I could get my own money, so I could get what I want instead of asking my mother. They (parents) gave me lectures about I'm sick and tired of you asking me for money."





A 17 year old Jamaica Plain female stated that: "I wanted to work but my mother wouldn't let me. She said that she would give me whatever I want. I would not have to work for it. See, my other brothers work."

By contrast, a 14 year old Jamaica Plain male indicated that "I always wanted to work so that I could give my mother some money, and put some money in the bank and save for the future."

Finally, a 14 year old Charlestown female said about not having a job: "I always had to depend on my parents for money. I never liked to come sit down and ask them for money all the time, 'cause I know if they give it to me that it wouldn't be fair; they'd have to give it to my brothers and sisters. And they couldn't do that all the time because you know they got to pay the bills and stuff. But, this way... if they need the money, you know, I help them out. They don't ask me for a really lot of money...

The views expressed in the last comment were shared by a number of teenagers from various parts of the city--Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester and Charlestown. Many youngsters not only work to escape boredom and depression but to gain personal independence and because they wish to help their parents by alleviating some of the expenses of the household. Several youngsters stated that while they were not working, they "feared for life on the streets because the streets can be a dangerous place." It is also evident that some youngsters become socialized



into an ethic of work early in their lives and become impatient at having to wait "so long" to be eligible for work due to existing child labor laws.

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### Feelings on Being in The Marketplace

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While it is not unexpected that the youth in this sample would have particularly positive responses to being in the labor market, the kinds of attitudes conveyed about being employed are worthy of hearing:

A 14 year old female from Dorchester described her feelings about working in the following manner:

"Well, working is a lot of fun because you be around kids and you do a lot of activities."

A 16 year old Dorchester female expressed a number of feelings about being employed. She said: I feel comfortable. See, working here with people I know, when they bring me closer to them, I can learn more and do more. Since I want to work with kids for a profession... since I am working here I feel that they could help me (the adults).. and I have people I can go to myself when I have a problem. Its really like a home to me... I think that the only reason why I am working is because I hate to bother my parents for money. I feel I am getting older now and that I can do it... so I can buy my own school clothes... so I can do more things without spending my parents' money. Because I feel like I'm old enough to do it now. So I thought that maybe a job would help me. So, when I first got my job and I



realized that I bought my own clothes, and used my own money and could put it to good use, my parents felt better about it because they said, 'Well, you can depend on yourself as well' cause when I grow up in my life depending on my parents all the time 'cause I know there is going to be a time when they're going to leave me and I am going to have to depend upon myself anyway. So, I picture this as a practice for when I get older. I'll know what to do."

A Charlestown 14 year old female said she enjoyed working because of "the responsibility I guess. Because, like, about the money thing, now I don't have to bother my parents all the time for money 'cause I got a brother and a sister... I make my own money and learn for the future."

A 14 year old Jamaica Plain male says "working feels good. I have money to spend. I gave my mother \$50.00 and my grandmother \$20.00. I am planning on getting a bank account."

A Jamaica Plain 15 year old female says that she likes working because, "I am learning skills that will help me when I become an adult."

Other interviewees expressed additional feelings about being employed. Some communicated pleasure at having some form of independence and responsibility, and being in positions in which people trusted them with a responsibility to get things done. All of them viewed a job as a reprieve from having to ask others (parents, siblings or friends) for money and found a good deal of





satisfaction about being able to work and earn money on their own. Several view the current job as a way of gaining experience for future jobs and as a means of saving money for college. Many of the interviewees were proud of the fact that they could now assist their parents, primarily their mothers, with household expenses or to give something to their siblings. While a few of them expressed displeasure at the difficulties of their first jobs, others found the work experience challenging, interesting and an opportunity to meet a number of different kids. Several viewed working as the primary means of "staying out of trouble," or "keeping off the streets."

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#### Attitudes of Their

#### Unemployed Friends

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Interviewees were queried about their friends with respect to their employment and attitudes toward working. While a significant number of the interviewees reported that most of their friends were working, often for the first time as they were, others reported that their friends were not employed and were having a difficult time finding work. On this question, these expressions were articulated:

A 16 year old male from Uphams Corner stated: "Most of my friends have jobs. Most of them like working; one of them doesn't work. His cousin pays his way to concerts but he wants to work and says he's going to look for a job."



By contrast, another male from Uphams Corner, age 15, had this to say: "My friends sleep all day and wait for me to come home. They wait until late in the afternoon to look for a job and you have to go early in the morning. So, its their fault (if they don't have a job)."

Still another male from Uphams Corner, age 14, stated that all of his friends except one had found a summer job. "He applied for ABCD but didn't get hired..."

A 17 year old Charlestown male stated that: "all work like me. They have a real good attitude about work. They feel good because they're making a lot of money. All of them need the money and, they have to work -- they have to help out with school (they need money in the bank for proms and stuff)."

A 14 female from Charlestown reported that "Only one friend works. They just don't want something that they have to do."

A 14 year old female from Charlestown responded that her friends "don't like it (working). My best friend right now, she's not working. She's older than me... but I got a job. She don't have a lot of money sometimes; so, and she's always saying 'I wanna get a job, this and that.' I'm not sure she really wants to work because she don't really do it. She wants to have a job but she's just kind of lazy in getting one. Because if she wanted to, she's old enough. She's old enou enough; she's past 16; so she could really apply for any job; even part times."





A 15 year old male from Dorchester stated that most of his friends "were not working. They're out riding bikes, doing regular things that I did when I wasn't working. Now, they wish they had a job."

A 19 year old Charlestown female spoke only of one friend who was unemployed: "She's not the type to get a job. She applied for a summer job. I don't know exactly what happened, but she's the lazy type. She doesn't want to get a job. She gets an allowance at her house, actually for just washing dishes when she's supposed to clean the house. She doesn't care about school either. All my other friends have jobs."

An 18 year old Dorchester female responded that among her unemployed friends were many "who are expecting babies. They're too young."

Another 18 year old Dorchester female claims that she knows a "lot of kids who are selling drugs. Around my way other kids think about smoking reefers and selling drugs and things like that. There is nothing wrong with smoking reefers once in awhile... I just see people doing crazy things and people dying so quick these days. Its a shame, you know. I just hope that I live as long as I think I should, you know."



An 18 year old unemployed male expressed the following sentiments about his unemployed friends: "A lot of them are bullheaded. They are into selling drugs... I live in drugs. My whole neighborhood is just filled with drugs. I hate it to this day. I just got to get out. The only way to do that is to set that straight line where I'm going... Its the only way I'll do that."

Another 18 year old male stated that: "My friends aren't the kind you would want to take home to your mother. They don't want a regular job. I've been in jail a couple of times. Once for armed robbery, assault and battery and car theft."

A 15 year old female summed up the feelings of a number of teenagers in this survey when she said: "I know a lot of kids who are looking for work and cannot find a job anywhere. They keep getting turned down. I hope they don't turn to selling drugs."

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Plans for Current

Wages

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The most frequent response to the question, "How do you plan to use the money you are making now?" revealed intentions to save money for school clothing; save money for school activities; spend money on clothing and items they always wanted; take friends out to the movies; buy something nice for my mother; "help my mother" or parents out; and put money in the bank.



Some responded that:

"I just waste it on stupid things; food and stuff."

"I pay bills and buy clothes."

"When I get my paycheck, I'm going to budget my money.

My sister, I watch her. She always has money. She knows how to budget herself. I have to think what I have to do to get myself straight; so I have to budget myself."

Another stated that:

When I got it (money), the only thing I did was go shopping, buy clothes. That was the only thing I did with it. But now, if I got a paycheck, I would know how to manage it... 'cause I came to realize that clothes... that being pretty, that's not it any more. Those clothes, you can't live in those clothes. You can't drive those clothes around... You know what I'm saying? Looking good, that's beyond it now. I can save money, now."

Another responded:

"I bought my girlfriend a diamond engagement ring and a Toyota for myself which I later crashed. I rented a limousine for my girlfriend's prom and for her birthday. My mother doesn't require me to give her any money but I do anyway.

Still another reported:

"I'm paying off debts... paying people back all the money I borrowed since I haven't been working. Mostly, I spend money on clothes but I am saving for tuition."





One said that:

"Last week when I got my check, it was like I had to pay back my father for when he paid for my bike, pay back people I owe money to, pay my bills; then, whatever I have left over, I usually spend freely. What I want I usually get. It's like going out and celebrating. And, it's gone right now. But mainly what I do with my money is to try and put it away and save some for school clothes and towards my car."

Another replied that:

"I need to learn to spend wisely sometimes. I need to slow down. When I got my paycheck last Thursday, I opened up a bank account. I put in \$20.00."

One 14 year old said:

"I give my mother money. I am putting my money in the bank because I want to go to college."

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And, What About The  
Future?

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"I wish that the future would hurry up; so that I could turn 16 and get a driver's permit."

"The things I want to do take time; so I don't want the future to come quick. I want a good job and safe schools for my kids. The public schools are too violent."

The extremes expressed in those two statements underscore the range of feelings, aspirations and concerns about the future revealed among the participants in this study. Perhaps, the most effective method of communicating their attitudes,



perceptions and beliefs about what the future holds for these 14 to 20 year old youngsters is to permit their own voices to be heard:

"I want basically what the average person who works everyday wants. I want a house. I want a car. I want a nice business of my own. I want a place where my son can go out and play . . . a yard with other little kids. . . not in Dorchester or around. That would be like sending him into a rat trap. I can't live around here. Its just not for me."

Another said:

"I feel that I have a chance but I still have a lot of work to do before I get to where I am going."

One offered:

"The future is about 50-50. Maybe I will (make it) or maybe I won't make it. I feel disgusted... seems like nothing is going right. That's why... because of the way things have just happened."

A more optimistic respondent stated:

"I definitely feel comfortable about the future. I'm definitely going to college (in 1987). I'm going to Newburg Junior College to study accounting.

In the same trend, one stated:

"I think about if I am going to college or not. But my mother is trying to tell me that would take too long. So, she is trying to get me to take the easy one -- being a secretary. I don't like secretarial work. I'm not interested in that."

Another said:

"I think about going to college and becoming a teacher. I like Math. I do well in school."





A young female was uncertain when she stated:

"I look at my future... I have to have something good for my future, not for no-one else but for myself. I don't know what is going to come in the future; so I'll just have to take it as it comes... as working and respecting myself... Having respect for myself and things like that."

A similar uncertainty was expressed by another young woman:

"The future depends. I am optimistic but it all depends. One often tries for things that sometimes we cannot achieve. So, it depends upon how things work out."

More optimism was evident in this young male's response:

"If the (military) service is good to me... I plan on staying there until I get a pension. Hopefully, (I can) get a Masters degree or something like that and get a good background so that when I raise a family, they won't have to see drugs. I want to succeed in life so that my kids... can see what I did."

Optimism was tempered by uncertainty in this young woman's vision:

"I think my future is well-organized. I have plans. I wanted to be a lawyer but that means going to college. Then, I wanted to be a doctor. But you still have to go to college and then to school after that. That's a lot of money to go to college. You need scholarships and stuff like that."

Uncertainty also framed this young man's perspective:

"I feel uncertain about the future. I'm 18 now. Legally, I am an adult; so I'm gonna have to be on my own sooner or later, and that kind of scares me. I'll be on my own for the first time. All these things I could do. I not sure what I want to do. I'm more afraid, but I'm not certain about what I'm gonna do. Everything will be alright though."



Doubt was expressed by this young male:

"Thinking about the future makes me feel weird because you never know what's going to happen."

Fear was the central theme in this fourteen year old male's about the future:

"I think about the future. I think its going to be kind of rough... more rough than good, 'cause every year the streets are getting badder and badder. Some people are getting scared to go out into the streets. So, I think about that sometime. I think its better to think about the good things."

Specific goals were articulated by some youngsters. One said:

"Oh yea! I think about the future. I'll be a junior this year. I wish I'll become a plumber. I'm taking that up at\_\_\_\_\_."

Another stated:

"I would like to go to college one day to study business administration just like my mother."

Others communicated caution when asked about the future:

"I always wondered what the future holds for me. In a way though, I feel its best to just deal with today, get it over with... hope that I live to see tomorrow and stuff."

And,

"I think that if I can go on with what I'm doing, that everything will be alright. If I don't, then, everything will go down hill."

These are representative voices of young people whose vision of the future is determined by the conditions of their present world. The optimism articulated by some attest to aspirations to realize a better life than the ones that seem to encircle them or as a manifestation of what their parents have encouraged them to believe about their own potential. The doubts, uncertainty, and fears expressed by others



reveal a heavy toll that present conditions have already taken on their young lives. Yet, there is a desire to achieve something better. There is a realization that work, hard work, education and planning are absolutely necessary for them to escape economic disabilities and an unacceptable social environment. For all of these youngsters, and thousands like them who were not able to find employment, intervention and outreach are part of the instruments that will enable them to achieve such aspirations.





## STATE SPONSORED OUTREACH INITIATIVES

The Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan for 1986-1988 describes three groups of initiatives that have either gotten underway or which are in the planning stage. They are characterized as (1) planning development initiatives, (2) program initiatives, and (3) system building initiatives. The articulation of these categories is an effort to continue the process of establishing a comprehensive service delivery system of education, training and employment for citizens in need throughout the Commonwealth.

The State reports that a policy development process was initiated in 1985. While some progress has clearly been achieved toward that end, it may be argued that that comprehensive and coordinated policy that is uniformly desired has not been as yet achieved. This policy formulation encompasses efforts either achieved or underway through the Commonwealth Employment Forum, the Commonwealth Employment Initiative, Legislative Initiatives, and commonwealth Futures (The Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan, 1986-1988).

A wide range of activities could be reported under the category of "program initiatives." However, since the primary focus of this study is on youth initiatives, mention is made only of program initiatives of special importance to the youth population of the State. In this regard, the State has initiated efforts to establish and implement performance standards for JTPA funded programs; to expand ET-Choices to cover younger mothers; and to expand the Pregnant and Parenting Teens Program (The Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan, 1986-1988). System building initiatives include MASS JOBS, technical assistance, and fundraising.

Although the Governor's Plan identifies a wide range of outreach activities, the focus of attention here is on the work of the Office of Training and Employment Policy (OTEP) since this office appears to be the coordinator of a significant



proportion of youth-oriented outreach programs.\* However, other state-sponsored programs are also reviewed.

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Office of Training and  
Employment Policy

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Legislation was filed to expand the employment and training functions by the Commerce and Labor Committee in 1986. However, a major responsibility of OTEP is to administer funds allocated largely by the federal government to the State under the Jobs Training and Partnership Act (JTPA). The Jobs Training and Partnership Act replaced the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1983. OTEP allocates JPTA funds to fifteen jobs training offices in service delivery areas (SDAs) distributed throughout various parts of the state. In turn, the SDAs, under contract to OTEP, allocate grants to a network of providers within their jurisdiction or area. A private industry council (PIC) oversees each SDA. Although the actual composition of PICs may vary from place to place and over time, by law, the membership of each PIC must have a 51 percent representation from the business community. Up to but no more than 49 percent of the membership may be drawn from labor, education,

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\*The discussion which follows is based primarily upon interviews with Sarah Smyth, Manager of Marketing and Communications, OTEP; Maria Grigorieff, Director of Policy and Planning, OTEP; Cecelia Riviera-Casale, Research Coordinator, OTEP; Catherine M. Dunham, Governor's Office of Human Resources; Joseph Deery, Manager of Applicant Services, DES; Robert Vinson, Director of Research, DES; and Jose Perez of the Executive Office of Economic Affairs.





and other sectors. Members of the PICs are volunteers who contribute their own expertise in ways that facilitate the programmatic and policy goals of the SDAs.

The SDAs are decentralized and autonomous from state and federal governments and may use funds received from OTEP as desired so long as they operate within the guidelines established by OTEP. Therefore, one of the functions of OTEP is to monitor those job training offices within the SDAs that have contracts with that office.

OTEP's mandate is largely remedial; that is, as one informant stated, "to work with people after they have failed;" and to serve the economically disadvantaged. However, under JPTA law the States have considerable authority over the allocation of funds to them by the federal government. Therefore, OTEP, by exercising its authority, may set limited policies for the SDAs, especially policies regarding performance standards, incentives grants, and coordination of programs. Even so, there is a great deal of discretion at the local levels.

There are three major titles under the JPTA: Title IIA; Title IIB, and Title III. The largest portion of JPTA funds are located under Title IIA, and forty percent of that money must be spent on youth (age 14-21). Bonuses are provided SDAs that meet performance requirements (e.g., proportions of minorities and economically disadvantaged youth in their programs). Most of the discretionary money here is spent on youth. Under Title IIB, all monies must be spent on youth. Title III funds are used for such activities as the Dislocated Workers Grant.

In FY 87, Massachusetts received \$55 million in JPTA monies. The state employed, as is customary, a formula based upon population and unemployment rates in the SDAs for the allocation of its \$55 million. Under Title II-B, \$20,589,861 was allocated to support the Summer Jobs Program. One interviewee reported that the Summer Jobs Program did not spend all monies budgeted for it in FY 85. The



SDAs were budgeted for \$19 million in 1985 and for 96% of that \$19 million for FY 86, or a four percent cutback.

In FY 88, Massachusetts received \$40.6 million in JTPA. funds, a loss of \$14.4 million. One significant consequence of that loss of federal dollars is that the Summer Jobs Program was able to subsidize 5,500 fewer jobs in the Summer of 1987 than it did in 1986.

The Summer Jobs For Youth Program, supported by Title II B money, is funded at approximately \$20 million per year. Its target group consists of 14 to 21 year old, unemployed, under-employed and displaced workers, and AFDC recipients in their upper teens. The 1986 goal was to place some 17,000 economically disadvantaged youngsters in summer jobs among some 6,000 work sites scattered throughout the state. It was estimated that some 45 percent of the participants were youth from minority groups and 8,000 were AFDC recipients. Work sites included libraries, schools, hospitals and other primarily non-profit institutions or agencies.

The matching of youth to jobs is done locally; program coordination is done locally. OTEP staff reported that it is extremely difficult to recruit youth from this population for program participation. Explanations for this difficulty include the fact that the jobs do not pay attractive wages (usually \$3.55-\$4.00/hour), and are not especially stimulating. Further, there is a problem in the dissemination of information about the availability of these jobs. Too often, young people must rely upon their own emotions to engage in what may appear to them to be a useless and interminable job search before they 'luck up' on a low-paying, short-lived summer job. Many, however, are able to achieve job placement more quickly if they have a social network of friends who are knowledgeable about available summer jobs.

Other State initiatives include: (1) MASS Jobs, (2) The Youth Entrepreneurial Development Project, (3) Program for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, (4) the Futures Program, (5) Technical Assistance, (6) Offenders Program, (7) a Summer Jobs





Program operated by the Division of Employment Security, (8) the Governor's 8% Discretionary Grant Programs.

The MASS Jobs Program was initiated in 1985 in cooperation between OTEP, the Division of Employment Security and the Department of Commerce and the 15 PICs and SDAs distributed in various parts of the State. Its primary purpose was to disseminate information about the range of services available to the unemployed. Broad use was made of print and electronic media for advertisements that showed the types of jobs and job-related services offered under MASS Jobs. An 800 number was provided so that interested persons could telephone for information on any aspect of the program of special attraction to them. Youth were encouraged to "look ahead and explore a variety of employment options open to them." Essentially, MASS Jobs was designed to create awareness about job opportunities.

Creating that awareness was a central component of the MASSJobs marketing campaign. It was also a way for the state to send a "unified message" about its commitment to expanded job opportunities. Between August 1985 and June 1986, some 10,000 telephone calls had been received in the MASSJobs office from persons seeking more information about available jobs.

About 900,000 people in the state meet OTEP's-income guidelines for participation in training and employment programs. Of the 809,000 persons age 14 and over, some 44,000 of the eligible persons are between the ages of 14 and 15. Many of these youngsters are "multiple risk" persons who may be (1) state wards needing care and services, or who come under court jurisdiction, or who may come under the jurisdiction of youth services; (2) kids from poverty-stricken families, (3) special needs youth such as those covered by Chapter 766 or 94134, needing a clear transition to work.

The state assumes a significant correlation between the issues of teenage motherhood, school drop-outs and poverty. Consequently, a major portion of its





current and anticipated directives addressing the problems of youth and youth unemployment are oriented to these areas.

The Pregnant Parenting Teens Program is a JTPA Program funded at \$1.4 million in FY 86. It is targeted toward older teens (16-19 years old) who presumably will benefit from additional education and job training before actual movement into the labor force. This group consists of 450 teen mothers who have not completed high school, want to work and desire appropriate training that will make them employable at an acceptable wage level and functional as productive citizens. This program was in the developmental stage during the Summer of 1986 and was to be modeled after the highly successful E-T Choices Program. By Summer 1987, this program was operational in several SDAs (See Boston Initiatives).

Experimental programs covering the areas of literacy and language, school drop-outs, teen pregnancy, day care, special needs and poverty are underway in Lawrence, Worcester, Springfield, Boston, and Brockton. Under the Commonwealth Futures Project, an effort is underway to organize systematic programs for drop-out prevention, involving several state agencies. This program was initiated in five cities; the expectation is to expand it to cover 20 cities through the cooperation of their school systems. The Massachusetts Drop-out Prevention Bill provides funding for this program. The Futures Program was initially funded by the Mott Foundation. There is also an Offenders Program through which direct jobs placement is provided for court involved youth. It is currently operating in Boston, Lawrence, Springfield, New Bedford and Brockton.

The Division of Employment Services (DES) operates a separate Summer Jobs Program for the state (The State Summer Jobs Program). This program is oriented toward youth between the ages of 16 and 22. While there is a statewide network of some 38 employment offices distributed throughout the Commonwealth, the field office staff to support this program has been reduced by 30 percent since 1982 due



primarily to decreases in federal funding. Applicants for these jobs register through their local DES office. However, at one time, persons were selected by lottery or obtained cards from their legislators which virtually guarantee employment.

The Applicant Services Unit in the DES develops a computerized file of young people wishing permanent employment as well as a printout of youth interested in summer jobs. A separate listing is developed for youth from minority groups so as to enhance the probability of their selection for summer employment. The Department of Public Works, The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), the private sector and the Offices of Environment Management use these lists in their recruitment of young people for summer programs. Recruitment strategies involve individual contact with employing companies, the use of want ads, referrals and extensive networking. Local employment centers tend to develop their own specific outreach activities in order to reach eligible youth. There is an active outreach program for minority youth. For example, Robert Handy of the Roxbury Employment Service Office uses a mobile van for moving into the "hard-to-reach" neighborhoods in order to heighten or create awareness among neighborhood youngsters about available job opportunities. Efforts are also made to work with the private sector through the Boston Compact In-School Programs by which high school seniors can be placed into full-time jobs.. Through the Employment Services Representative System, a file is constructed and utilized for identifying jobs in the private sector.

Certain problems persist with respect to identification and selection of participants, and their movement into available jobs. One of the problems lies in "the presentation of self" by youngsters in search of a job. There is a tendency for young people to "dress for their peers rather than for jobs" when searching for a job. The attire worn by many and the mannerisms displayed create negative impressions of these youngsters. Consequently, potential employers never permit





them to demonstrate their potential as productive employees. Another persistent problem is the racial prejudice of some employers, especially their fear of Black youth. Certain judgments about a teenager's work habits and abilities on the job are made strictly on the basis of race. Hence, many of the smaller companies, especially, whose decision-makers are without a social conscious, resort to stereotypes about fears of white employers working with minorities or fears of loss of customers if minorities are in visible positions, will not hire minority youth. The best opportunities for minority youth seem to lie with larger companies whose leaders have made a commitment to equal employment opportunity. A third major problem involves the size of the program. The program does not serve as many young people in need or "young people at risk as should be served." Only about 10 percent of the target population is served each year. Further, expanded research is needed about the success and problems associated with the program. There is a need for follow-up and feedback so that a more effective job of serving youth in need can be accomplished.

Young people in this program are employed primarily in the service sector with a demand for unskilled workers during the summer months. Some find jobs as construction laborers, conservation helpers on the litter patrol, and a select few are employed as lifeguards. In the main, these jobs, which are available in two work cycles of 6-8 weeks, pay a minimum wage of \$4.00 per hour. A few pay as much as \$260 per week. During the 1986 summer, the legislature appropriated \$3 million to support approximately 2,000 to 3,000 young people for jobs under this Summer Jobs Program. Even when the two types of summer jobs programs described here are combined, 17,000 under IIB funds and 2,000 to 3,000 under DES, their numbers would clearly indicate a failure to meet the needs of a huge segment of the youth population that should be served. Such facts call into serious question the position taken by one state official that, because so many people are advertising for



employees, a young person's "opportunities are only limited by their imagination to find, a job."

The Research Center of OTEP also offers technical assistance for SDAs and providers throughout the state. Its research library is open to persons who desire to make use of its collection of resource materials.

Another state initiative is the Youth Entrepreneurial Development Project (YEDP). This project was initiated in January 1986 as a means of "building the income generating capacity of innercity youth." Initially, it involved from 60 to 100 young people from Boston, Cambridge and Lawrence and provided assistance to help them "develop, own, and sustain"... new small business enterprises. As a pilot project, the program was designed to cover an 18 month period. During that time, participants in the program would be provided (1) personal support from the Youth Business Developers, (2) business development support, and (3) financial support. The Youth Business Developers work closely with the participants in the program to help them develop and sharpen the kinds of personal skills that facilitate success in business ventures. Volunteers from the private sector serve as mentors and offer from 15 to 20 hours per month to each young entrepreneur in training on matters of finance and business operations. The YEDP Board invests a maximum of \$2,000 in start-up capital to each entrepreneur after his/ her business plans have been approved.

The YEDP literature reports that its target populations consist of youth between the ages of 17 and 24 who have "no apparent economic alternatives, no apparent institutional alternatives," who are "demonstrated risk-takers, willing to hustle, and who are "street smart." These characteristics "describe youth who are headed for trouble." But a fundamental premise of this project is that, they need not reach that end and will not do so if they are of properly supported" and their





energies can "be channeled into productive entrepreneurial activity" (Youth Entrepreneurial Project Description, 1986).

During the first 18 months of operation, the goal was to establish 25 to 30 youth-owned and operated businesses. Another goal was to refer an additional 400-500 young people to other human services programs, such as a training program, a job or an educational program, that was available to them in various parts of the state. Finally, it was expected that a strong resource network of business developers could be operationalized by virtue of the role models who volunteered their time and services to this program.\*

Success of JTPA programs is measured by the performance of its participants. OTEP's Guide to the 13 Week Follow-Up Tables states that until recently, success was determined primarily by the accomplishments of participants during the time they remained in the program. In 1986, steps were initiated to measure success in terms of the accomplishments of participants after they had been terminated from the program. A person with a "positive determination" was deemed to have successfully completed the program. The impetus for this shift in determining success originated from four measures proposed in 1985 by the State Job Training Coordinating Council and by a Modification to the Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan (See Guide to 13 Week Follow-Up). Indices evaluated were the amount of money the program participant earned after termination; duration on the job; the average of the number of weeks employed and the degree to which welfare benefits were reduced. All of this information was to be collected thirteen weeks after termination from the JTPA program (Guide to Follow-Up Tables).

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\*At the time of this report, no formal evaluation of the success of this program was available.





Recent data, based upon a study conducted by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, showed remarkable success of JTPA terminations. It was reported that 83 percent of youth placed in JTPA jobs remained employed at least a year after job placement (OTEP INFO REACH, May 1987). The Department of Labor (DOL) also proposed a similar determination strategy in January 1986. A decision was made to use periods in FY 86 and FY 87 as a trial period for the collection of data needed to measure success along aforementioned lines. Thereafter, for FY 88, the SDA would be evaluated on new performance measures. SDAs could also have the opportunity to adapt their performance in the light of new performance measures of the effectiveness of their programs.\*

A major impediment to an overall successful attack against the persistent problem of youth employment in a booming economy in Massachusetts is the lack of a well-defined and coordinated youth employment policy. In recent years, the State has attempted to meet the challenge of articulating and implementing that policy. A most recent effort followed the passage of JTPA when, in 1983, an Education Task Force was created to focus on policy formulation and program development utilizing 8 percent monies. In 1984, the Education Task Force was replaced by the Youth Coordinating Council (YCC). This body is comprised of "educators, employment and training administrators, social service providers,

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\*As of the writing of this report, no information was available from OTEP concerning this new requirement. However, the comment made by Representative Sandra Graham that success is performance driven and therefore there may be a built-in selection bias which favors "the more likely to succeed" rather than the "hard to reach" and "hard to place" teenager means that the evaluation procedures and success measures should be carefully monitored.



employers, and labor representatives," committed to the goal of economic self-sufficiency among the youth of the Commonwealth (Youth Coordinating Council By-Laws, 1987:30). This YCC is a standing committee of the State Job Training Coordinating Council. It has the responsibility of recommending policy objectives, evaluating program performance, encouraging the development of new youth employment initiatives, and fostering inter-agency cooperation (Youth Coordinating Council By-Laws, 1987:30).

Since 1984, the YCC has devoted priority attention to "youth at risk" or young people who face enormous obstacles to attaining economic self-sufficiency due to low educational achievements, economic disabilities by virtue of family hardships, and other related factors. One important program initiated to attack the problem of school dropouts in this high risk group is the Commonwealth Futures. The central objective of Commonwealth Futures is not only to attack the school-dropout problem as a major impediment to full youth employment, but to reduce fragmentation and disconnectedness of services provided youth by innumerable agencies and organizations within the Commonwealth. Inasmuch as Commonwealth Futures activities are relatively new, full programmatic impact cannot be measured as of this report. However, it is, without question, a worthy enterprise that will be carefully monitored.

Finally, there is a need to expand vocational educational efforts throughout the state so that minority youth will be able to maximize benefits and potential employability as a consequence of their participation in such educational programs.





## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OUTREACH INITIATIVES IN BOSTON\*

One of the first observations to be made about youth employment problems in Boston is that there is a network of actors who has been attacking the problem of youth unemployment in this area for several years. These actors are not only known to each other but they have often been interchangeable in various agency positions over the past several years. These actors--public officials, representatives of the private sector, members of community-based organizations, providers on contract to service delivery areas --all communicate a sustained commitment to resolve or at least alleviate the youth unemployment problem by devising newer untried outreach initiatives and strategies, exchanging and sharing information and resources that will help them individually and collectively reduce youth unemployment and move larger numbers of youth in need into the labor market.

While there is a concern over the quality of data used to determine the rate of youth unemployment, and most would agree that the figures publicized do not begin to reveal the magnitude of the youth unemployment problem either in the City of Boston or in the State, their primary concern is on how to improve the situation they see from day to day. Hence, there is a considerable amount of inter-agency cooperation, especially between the Private Industry Council and the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Service.

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\*This description draws heavily upon information provided through interviews with Kristin McCormack, Director of the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services and members of her staff, Denise Dodds, and Jane Morrison); James Darr, Director of the Boston Private Industry Council, and Larry Dwyer, Director of Boston Community Schools.



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## An Overview of the Mayor's Office Of Jobs and Community Service (JCS)

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The Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Service (JCS) is one of the fifteen Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) in the State. Although this office addresses a number of problems confronting adults in need of services within the City of Boston, the special focus in this report is on youth programs sponsored or operated by JCS.

Sources of funds. In FY 87, JCS allocated \$4,378,539 to its providers or agencies operating "employment" and "education" for employment programs designed specifically for youth. It was estimated that these funds would help providers assist approximately 7,600 youth participate in these programs. The FY 87 JCS funds to support youth programs represented a decrease from the FY 86 budget of \$4,817,234. However, the FY 86 budget was an increase over the FY 85 budget of \$4,040,213. Inasmuch as JTPA funds are the major source of the JCS youth budget spent on employment and education for employment programs, fluctuations in these federal funds account for changes in amounts of money available to JCS during each year. Within that context, Kristin McCormack reports that "JTPA Title IIB funding for Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) has been the major source of fluctuations in funding. In FY '86, for example, Boston was allocated an additional \$800,000 in SYETP funds that were not spent by other SDAs." That allocation accounted for the increase over the FY 85 allocation.

In FY 87, JCS youth programs were supported through funds received from four sources: (1) JTPA Titles IIA and IIB, \$3,950,539; (2) JTPA Governor's 8 percent Discretionary Grant, \$270,000; (3) Community Development Block Grant, \$90,000; and (4) Department of Education Grant, \$68,000.





In addition to funds administered by the JCS, the City of Boston serves a significant number of youth in "human service" and adult programs. However, since the JCS is the principal agency serving youth education, training and employment needs, it is the focus of attention in this section. Nevertheless, mention should be made of the fact that some youth are served through some of the 20 training programs for adults under contract from the JCS.

Youth Programs. The City of Boston, through the JCS, contracts with 12 providers of services to youth. This figure represented an increase by four providers over the eight under contract in FY 86. The twelve providers are: (1) ABCD; (2) City Roots, (3) Edco; (4) Bridge Over Troubled Waters, (5) Cardinal Cushing, (6) Jobs for Youth, (7) Alianza Hispana, (8) Boston Employment Resource Center, (9) Ecumenical Social Action Committee, (10) South Boston Neighborhood House; (11) Federated Dorchester Neighborhood House and (12) Crittenden Hastings Center. These providers are on performance based contracts; hence, success is determined by the degree to which they meet the goals articulated when their contracts were approved.

JCS also addresses youth unemployment associated with failure to complete a high school education by using federal JTPA IIA monies to finance an Alternative Education Program. This program is a system of seven education programs designed to provide economic self-sufficiency through the attainment of important educational credentials (e.g., high school diploma, G.E.D.). Another goal of this program is to place and retain youth in jobs which offer a good wage and a promise of advancement.

Educational credentialing involves an individual competency-based approach. This approach recognizes the unique needs of each youth; allows participants to become actively involved in the learning process and permits them to work at their own pace (Youth Programs, 1986). Youth are provided vocational counseling, job





readiness training and the support of Job Placement Specialists at each of twelve sites.

Approximately 650 "out-of-school" youth were served during the 1985-86 school year. Forty-two (42%) of those served were welfare recipients; 24 percent were residents of the Boston Housing Authority; 48 percent were Black; 23 percent Hispanic and 28 percent white. It is estimated that about 40 percent of those served during that period were pregnant or parenting.

Although final outcome data on participants were not available at the time of this report, the JCS has estimated that nearly 80 percent of those persons who have completed the program will have achieved at least one of the following four goals: (1) "achievement of a GED or BPS diploma, (2) entered employment, (3) higher education or skills training, or (4) returned to the school system to complete their education" (Youth Programs, 1986). The FY 88 budget support for this program is \$885,409; the number of programs is reduced to six and only 441 youth are served. However, the Alternative Education Initiative, funded in 1986 by City funds in collaboration with the Boston Public School Department and Boston Community Schools, operates on a budget of \$599,345. Twelve programs (agencies) and 396 youth will be served under this grant.

The JCS also administers the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP) with ABCD, the designated program operator. This program will be discussed in greater detail in the section that describes Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) programs.

A third program, the Private Industry Council (PIC) - Jobs Community Service (J.C.S.) Summer Jobs Program, is another effort to serve the needs of unemployed youth in Boston. This program serves approximately 2500 students in the Boston Public School System. They are placed in entry level positions in the city's business community. Many of the participating companies have signed the Compact



Agreement, and several of the students have already participated in either the Jobs Collaborative or Compact Ventures Program. Findings from follow-up studies on these youngsters show that this program is an effective path toward permanent jobs after high school completion for many of the participating students. JCS takes the position that this program enables it to "deliver a continuum of services" to youth; that is from Compact Ventures to the Job Collaborative to the Summer Jobs Program, and then, to a job after high school graduation. The Private Industry Council administers the Jobs Collaborative and Compact Ventures as components of a multi-faceted "In-school program." (See subsequent section on P.I.C. and the Boston Compact).

Another program sponsored by JCS for youth is Project BEEP. A case management approach is employed to serve 40 court-involved, out-of-school youth between 15 and 18 years of age. The program aims to provide a comprehensive and well-coordinated package of services to participants. Its success is tied to effective collaboration between the School System, the courts, community-based organizations (CBOs), other youth programs, and state agencies. Services provided include educational and employment training/ information, vocational counseling, and personal support services whenever needed.

A new program or outreach initiative was in the process of development during the 1986 Summer. This program is the Pregnant and Parenting Teen Initiative. It is funded by the Department of Welfare and planned to serve 72 pregnant or parenting teens, aged 16-19, who are AFDC recipients and not attending school. Again, a case management approach was envisioned. With this approach, young women were expected to receive "intake and assessment services, classroom instruction, personal and vocational counseling, job development and job placement services at Alternative Education sites" (Youth Programs, 1986). JCS staff





reported in 1987 that \$199,750 was allocated for four agencies to serve 80 parenting teens.

In November 1986, the JCS began working with the Boston Public School Department and the Boston Community Schools to develop an initiative designed to reduce the escalating drop-out rate in the City School System. An agreement was signed between Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, Superintendant Laval Wilson, and School Committee Chair, John Nucci, for joint cooperation on this program which intended to serve 300 youth in alternative education programs. A Request for Proposal was issued in November. The contract was actually awarded to 12 agencies, at a cost of \$599,345, who are planning to serve 396 youth.

The JCS also administers youth programs supported by a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The two components to this program are prevention and outreach to unemployed and out-of-school youth, and facilitation of racial harmony in the various neighborhoods. Like other youth initiatives, this program recognizes the fact that in Boston are thousands of youngsters who are left out of the advantages the city offers to others; kids who are not literate, many of whom are reading only at third grade level and would barely earn a minimum wage if they could obtain a job at a fast food service. Various sub-set initiatives are developed by grantees under this program including Jobs for Youth, Roxbury Youth Works, Boston Works (primarily adults) and the Dorchester Youth Collaborative. Block grant money also funds various sports activities such as the revitalized Police Athletic Leagues (PAL), All-Dorchester Sports and Youth Councils. The "goal here is to promote racial harmony" by choosing "All-Star Teams from different neighborhoods in Dorchester and matching them against suburban teams." In this process, the program attempts to build a Dorchester identity and decrease a local (Savin Hill, Fields Corner, etc.) identity. In 1986, teams were added from South



Boston and the South End. In FY 88, JCS also used \$27,000 in CDBG funds to support the pregnant and parenting teens initiative.

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## Boston Community Schools Programs

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The Boston Community Schools Program was established in 1972 by virtue of a Boston City Council Ordinance. From its inception, it was independent from the Boston School Department. Initially, this program was under the administration of the Public Facilities Commission. In 1976, this Commission assigned the Community Schools Program to the Mayor's Office and created the Mayor's Office of Community Schools.

The goals of the program are to "stimulate the development of the local community councils in order that they may address themselves to the identification of local needs and problems, and introduce educational, social, cultural and recreational programs and other procedures in response to those needs and problems" (Warren, 1984:50). To this initial mandate were added two expanded goals: service provision and political empowerment. This program represents a partnership between the City of Boston and its neighborhoods. The City assumes financial support for salaries, facilities, technical assistance and maintenance. The neighborhoods, after determining their own needs and programs they wish to operate, hires the staff to operate these programs (Warren, 1984:9). The community schools share space in twenty public school buildings, including space for classrooms, child care, and various arts activities.





Although the City of Boston provides a significant proportion of the program's budget, the City Schools' central office and local schools raise a major portion of their operating expenses from the private sector and other public sources. In 1986, its operating budget was \$12 million.

City Roots. Perhaps, its most important outreach initiative for the youth in Boston is a program called City Roots. This is an alternative high school program designed to assist students between the ages of 16 and 21 to obtain a GED certificate. As Warren (1984) states, "City Roots functions like a senior year in high school, and deals with career and social concerns as well as academic matters." Special attention is devoted to the development of coping strategies for dealing with difficult problems likely to be encountered during one's life and the decision-making processes with respect to defining career aspirations and goals and preparation for the world of work.

The alternative education program is divided into an educational component and an employment component. The program deals with a 100 percent drop-out population, encouraging them to complete at least a high school education. In operation for more than seven years, the program's basic operating concept is that unemployment is due largely to a lack of life skills and basic skills. Therefore, employability is enhanced by training drop-outs in ways to improve such skills. A competency-based curriculum is offered, and enrollees must pass the State curriculum in order to officially exit the program.

In 1986, 125 teenagers were enrolled in the program year-round. Pregnant teens are also permitted to enroll on a part-time basis. The program is in operation in Roslindale, East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston, Uphams Corner and Dorchester. Usually, from 20 to 30 teenagers are enrolled at each site. The site staff consists of two full-time teachers and two counselors. Students attend classes from 8:30 to 1:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.





Courses include Mathematics, reading, writing, workshops on values clarification, or skills development or on job training. After formal classes end, they may work or receive counseling. The employment component consists of a job-readiness unit and a direct employment unit.

Students may enter the program through referrals from social agencies, or by the courts, or through their own friendship networks and decide to enter on their own. Larry Dwyer, Director of the Boston Community Schools Program, stated that approximately 80 percent of the students enter the program as a direct result of contacts with friends. Some are BHA residents; almost all are economically disadvantaged.

Jobs Placements vary in quality and in opportunities for advancement. Students have been placed in jobs at such establishments as Brighams, janitorial services, auto shops and in positions such as stock clerks. In the main, the emphasis is on part-time jobs so that education and employment may be combined as a joint experience and their job experience can be utilized as a training tool. On-the-job experiences serve as a means of helping students understand ways to mesh their own expectation levels with job responsibilities and requirements. In-class sessions based upon job experiences also force students to critically assess their own work situation and engage in serious introspection about the degree of motivation they have developed for education and the world of work. It is possible in this program for students to advance to full-time jobs on the "middle shift." However, most students work from 15 to 20 hours per week. Work is encouraged especially for those in need of financial support. The program does not provide stipends. Nor does it grant any form of financial support. In the case of financial distress, and students in need of income-generating activities, students may be helped to find an appropriate job placement. Job counselors attempt to target placements in jobs



that do offer some form of advancement (e.g., New England Industrial Park in custodial positions, machinery, maintenance).

Students are encouraged to further their education by enrolling in developmental studies programs and other college programs at such institutions as the University of Massachusetts/Boston and Northeastern University. City Roots has a drop-out rate of about 15 percent per year.

Summer Employment Program. A second major youth program of special interest here is the Summer Employment Program. This program is operated in cooperation with Boys and Girls Club. Participants are involved in cleaning up parks, streets, and playgrounds during the summer months. This program is also called the Boston Youth Cleanup Corps (BYCC). During the summer of 1986, approximately 230 teenagers were divided into 22 crews for cleanup work covering a period of five weeks at a rate of \$4.00 per hour. The youth worked from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. on Mondays through Fridays.

Each youth is allowed one hat, one pair of gloves and two T-shirts (with Boston Youth Clean-Up Corps written on the front and "Help Keep Boston Clean" written on the back). Generally, the crews clean smaller lots so as to give youth a sense of accomplishment and to sustain their motivation for work. Interviews conducted on youth at three sites indicated a high degree of satisfaction among participants in this program. While no formal assessment of the program was available at the time of this writing, preliminary and informal interviews do suggest program success and the need to expand this program. Interviews with some of the BYCC staff revealed that a significantly larger number of teenagers were interested in this program than BYCC monies permitted for employment. The problem is in the bureaucracy that has not allocated sufficient funding for expansion to reach a larger share of the target population.





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## The Private Industry Council

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Legislation authorizing the Private Industry Councils was enacted in 1978; the Councils (PIC) came into existence in 1979. Therefore, the PICs actually predate JTPA -- the successor to the CETA program. As CETA was phased out and JTPA was enacted and operationalized, several of the 600 JTPA local boards incorporated themselves. Boston, with its long history of involvement in youth employment initiatives, established a completely independent PIC. It is not merely an adjunct to City Hall; however, a close working relationship between the Mayor of Boston and the PIC is necessary for the accomplishments of their mutual goals.

For purposes of broadening understanding of the importance of PIC's endeavors and its success in forging cooperation between city government, school systems, labor unions, businesses, and institutions of higher education, it may be illuminating to review some of the more important historical events with respect to youth employment.

In 1977, Boston received a Youth Entitlement Grant of \$12-\$15 million per year. This grant came under the purview of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Project of 1977 (YEDPA). The program not only enabled some 4,000 low-income youth to obtain guaranteed part-time jobs provided they remained in public school or in an alternative education program, it demonstrated how effective collaboration between city and school officials could be achieved (Spring, 1987:11). Importantly, this demonstration project was able to establish a positive relationship between youth employment and the retention of youngsters in school.



After the election of 1980 and a new Administration ensconced itself, there was a great collapse of money and the subsequent demise of the Youth Entitlement Demonstration Project. The City of Boston decided to eliminate "after-school paid jobs." (Proponents of the Boston Compact argue that that was a wise decision since the Boston Compact has demonstrated its capacity to find those jobs). The overall budget for PIC, for example, fell from \$50 million in 1981 to \$6 million in JTPA money within a relatively short period of time. One consequence of this decline in federal monies is that programs operated by other agencies, such as Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) have had to become more competitive for a shrinking dollar base.

The 1986 budget for the Boston PIC was approximately \$2 million to support the work of a staff of 50 persons. One-third of the budget came from JTPA funds; one third from contracts with the City of Boston, and one-third from private businesses and foundations. The central staff is considerably smaller in 1986 than it was prior to 1981. In turn, this reduction in staff has required a streamlining and greater specificity of functions and, perhaps, a tighter organizational structure that enables the Boston PIC to be nationally recognized for the quality of services it delivers.

Four PIC youth programs will be discussed in the following sections: (1) the Boston Compact, (2) the Compact Ventures, (3) Jobs Collaborative, and (3) the Summer Jobs Program.



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## The Boston Compact\*

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The Boston Compact grew out of a collective effort by the private sector, the school system, university and union leaders to address the problems of ill-prepared youth for participation in the labor market, school-to-work transition, improving the quality of schooling, and the need for better trained workforce in a changing Boston economy. As Spring (1987) points out, agreements signed with Boston businesses, university and union leaders and the Boston Public School System have placed them on record to be publicly accountable for their "progress or failure" to achieve some clearly defined and measurable goals.

The Boston Compact is an agreement between the Boston School Department, the business community, Boston area colleges and universities and labor unions to cooperate for the improvement of education, "work preparation, employment opportunities, and college prospects of students in Boston's public high schools" (Farrar and Cipollone, 1985:1). The formal signing of the contract occurred on September 22, 1982.

Under the initial agreement, the Boston School Department agreed to (1) increase student daily attendance by five percent annually; (2) realize a five percent annual reduction in the school drop-out rate; (3) raise the level of

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\*This discussion is based principally upon information culled from Eleanor Farrar and Anthony Cipollone, After the Signing: The Boston Compact 1982-1984 (Cambridge: The Huron Institute, 1985); William Spring, "Youth Unemployment and the Transition from School to Work: Programs in Boston, Frankfurt, and London," The New England Review (March/April 1987), 3-16; and interviews with James Darr, Executive Director of the Boston Private Industry Council.





mathematics and reading competence of high school graduates by 1986; (4) increase the college placement by five percent each year of graduates of Boston Public Schools, (5) to improve the job placement rates of public school graduates by five percent annually.

The first agreement was signed with the Boston Business Community. Business leaders agreed to: (1) work with the PIC to expand the number of schools, from six to seventeen, participating in its Jobs Collaborative Program; (2) recruit 200 firms by 1983 that would pledge to give "hiring priority status" to equally qualified Boston high school graduates; (3) employ 400 graduates of Boston high schools by 1983 (and to set hiring goals for each year); (4) raise the number of summer jobs available to "in-school" students from 750 in 1982 to 1,000 in 1983 (and to set new goals for summer employment in subsequent years).

In November 1983, a compact was signed with 25 area colleges and universities. These institutions agreed to: (1) use expanded awareness programs and counseling services as instruments for enrolling a 25 percent increase in the number of graduates from Boston Public Schools through 1988; (2) work with the Boston Public Schools to "strengthen their college preparatory curriculum;" (3) "increase financial aid opportunities, and (4) strengthen their own retention programs and activities."

In December 1984, the trade unions signed an agreement that commits them to annually allocate five percent of their apprenticeship positions for "qualified graduates of Boston high schools."

Inasmuch as a discussion of the structure and day-to-day operation of the Boston Compact is beyond the scope of this report, suffice it to say that the success experienced through the Compact is due to the commitment of participants in the agreement to the realization of its basic goals. It is not only the result of careful and systematic planning by program designers but subsequent planning and



implementation of strategies involving school administrators, career experience teachers, development officers, PIC staff, university, business and trade union liaison officers, and others committed to the success of the program.

The achievements realized through the Boston Compact can also be attributed to the lessons learned and the experiences observed from antecedent programs operated by PIC, especially the Jobs Collaborative Program and the Summer Jobs Program. The Jobs Collaborative and the Compact Ventures are "in-school" programs administered by PIC. The Jobs Collaborative Program is a "career development and work experience program" that originated with the support of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Its aim was to provide "in-school" work experiences that would help prepare students for the world of work and to ease the transition from school to work. The early success of this program, in James Darr's view, clearly facilitated acceptance of the basic concepts of the Boston Compact. Simultaneously, the advent of the Boston Compact fostered the growth of the kinds of jobs available to students after the school day. Hence, the Job-Collaborative program expanded rapidly from three to 14 schools and from 80 student participants in 1982 to more than 600 students in 1986. The expansion of the Jobs Collaborative program enabled the PIC to utilize "career, experience teachers (CATs)" for the teaching of career development, the preparation of participating students for summer employment and to ease the transition from school to work into more permanent positions.

The Compact Ventures, a drop-out prevention program, began in 1984 at two high schools, Dorchester High School and English High School. Its focus was on 9th and 10th graders, the levels at which high school dropout problems become critical. It was recognized that one of the factors leading to high drop-out rate was the fact that so many youngsters had fallen behind grade level in the crucial areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Under this program, classrooms are re-organized





and schedules are structured to target potential school dropouts. It is a full-service program that provides remediation tutoring career education, job placement and follow-up.

The Compact Ventures program in Boston has now been expanded to 10 high schools. Half of these schools are partially under the Governor's 8 percent program. Evidence from a report on pilot projects conducted in Dorchester and English high schools showed substantial improvements among ninth graders in the areas of "attendance, punctuality, discipline and basic skills" (Info Reach, May 1987).

The Ventures Program attempts to provide incentives for students to remain in school; outreach workers were hired for each school. Through them, support services and educational enrichment incentives were provided clusters of youngsters who benefited from shared experiences with their school life. While a claim may be made that the drop-out rate has been reduced, the "jury is still out" as to the actual success of this program.

However, the overall success of the Boston Compact may be measured in other ways. One indicator comes from results achieved in the Summer Jobs Program.

The Summer Jobs Program.<sup>\*</sup> This program was initiated in 1980 (and led to the development of the Jobs Collaborative Program). It is designed to place Boston public high school pupils in privately funded jobs during two summer months. Prospective participants must meet "prescribed academic and attendance requirements." The purpose of this set of requirements is to promote better high school preparation and improved school attendance. The PIC staff in the 17 high schools pre-screen students who must compete with all students for available jobs. The business community agreed to make jobs available to students who meet PIC requirements for program participation.

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<sup>\*</sup>This section is based upon materials supplied by James Darr, Executive Director of the Boston Private Industry Council.



Table 3. Students Placed in Boston Summer Jobs, 1982-1986

Year	Placement Goal	Actual Number of Students Placed
1982	752	852
1983	1,000	1,181
1984	1,500	1,766
1985	2,000	2,320
1986	2,500	2,600
1987	2,800	3,010

Source: James Darr, Executive Director; Boston Private Industry Council.  
 (Note: In 1987, Mr Darr was appointed Vice-President of the State  
 StreetBank. At press time, his successor at PIC had not been  
 announced).



Students work from 30 to 40 hours per week, and wages paid range from the minimum of \$3.35 per hour to more than \$10.00 per hour. The average paid on sponsored jobs is \$3.50 per hour, while that paid in the private sector averages about \$4.70 per hour. The degree to which this program has expanded since 1982 is illustrated in Table 3.

In 1985, the last year for which these data were available at the time of this report, 536 companies had contributed jobs for this program. Included were 28 suburban companies from 13 cities in the metropolitan Boston service area. This number of participating companies represented an improvement in excess of 70 percent (or 207 new contributors) over the 1984 summer program. This increase was attributed to an increase in the PIC job development staff and accelerated involvement and support of Mayor Flynn. Mayor Flynn joined with John Larkin Thompson, Chairman of the Boston Summer Jobs Program, in hosting several breakfast meetings, press conferences, and telephone pledge hours through which support for the program was solicited from the business community. As a result of these efforts, during the 1985 summer, 313 small businesses (less than 100 employees); 143 medium businesses (100 to 500 employees), and 80 large businesses (number 500 or more employees) participated.

The largest number of employers of students for the Summer Jobs Program in 1985 were the following: State Street Bank and Trust Company (83 jobs); Bank of Boston (65); Massachusetts General Hospital (60); New England Telephone (60); Zayre Corporation (51); John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company (40); IBM (38); New England Life Insurance Company (36); Bank of New England (32); Federal Reserve Bank (30); New England Medical Center (25) and Northeastern University (25 jobs).





Characteristics of Student Participants: Students employed in this program represented all high schools in Boston and every neighborhood in the city. Most students selected for this program came from Dorchester (788) followed in order by Roxbury (348); Mattapan (325); East Boston (162) and Hyde Park (116 students).

The racial composition of student employees showed that Black students, with 1,369 participants or 59 percent of the total, comprised the largest proportions. They were followed in order by white students (441 or 19%); Hispanic students 278 or 12%); Asian students (186 or 8%) and other (46 or "2%).

These data indicate that the program is expanding at a significant rate and that business participation has grown. In part, this expansion can be attributed to an increasing number of students who qualify for employment in the areas in which they are hired. It also reflects a greater proclivity of area businesses to draw upon this resource of labor to satisfy their urgent need for employers in an expanding economy in which it is increasingly difficult to find people willing to fill certain jobs at minimum wages. Nevertheless, students are able to earn needed money and begin to understand expectations and requirements of the work world.

Students were hired primarily in clerical jobs (52%) including "secretarial, reception, word processing, data entry, mailroom and messenger jobs. Others were hired in maintenance (12.5%), retail (10.1%), and dietary (7.4%)" jobs and other areas.

Boston Compact Graduate Jobs. Another significant measure of the success of the Boston Compact is the degree to which the employer agreement to hire Boston high school graduates in permanent jobs has been met. PIC data shows that the hiring goals have been reached every year since the agreement was signed. In 1983, 415 graduates were hired by 151 businesses; this represented a net gain of 15 more employed persons than was targeted. In 1984, a 50 percent improvement in the number of graduates hired was observed. Some 220 companies hired 607 graduates



for permanent positions. Follow-up studies on these employed graduates showed that at least 80 percent of them were still employed, and that an additional 11-12 percent had returned to educational pursuits on a full-time basis. More than 90 percent of the employed persons were working with companies that availed tuition reimbursement if they decided to continue their education.

The follow-up study on the Class of 1985 is further instructive on how successful the program has been in moving Boston high school graduates into permanent jobs. A goal of 750 permanent jobs was established by the PIC Board of Directors. The study showed that 823 1985 graduates were working in jobs obtained through the Boston Compact. Over 90 percent of that group were placed as a part of the services provided by the Jobs Collaborative. Others were hired by participating companies in the Boston Compact program. All graduates were to receive a full-year of follow-up services and on-the-job support from the staff of the Private Industry Council. The 823 persons in the Class of 1985 represented each of the 17 public high schools in Boston. English High School was represented by 72 students, while at the opposite end, Boston Latin Academy was represented by a single student.

Characteristics of Graduates: One fifth of the graduates were white while almost two of every three (63%) were Black. The remaining graduates were distributed among Hispanics (9%); Asians (7%); Native Americans (.4%) and others (.6%). The graduates primarily represented the neighborhoods of Dorchester (28%); Roxbury (14%); Mattapan (12%) and South Dorchester (9%). The remaining students were scattered among other communities or neighborhoods of the city. Almost six of every ten (59%) were female while approximately four of every ten (41%) were male. Their average age was 19 with the ages of 18 (43%) and 19 (41%) representing the modal numbers. In excess of 50 percent of these graduates come from homes receiving public assistance.





While 306 companies hired the 823 graduates, only 94 of the companies were signatories to the Compact Employer Agreement. Importantly, the 94 Compact companies were responsible for about five of every eight (512 out of 823) graduates who were hired. Two-hundred-and-forty of the employed graduates were hired by ten different companies: Bank of Boston (51); Liberty Mutual (49); John Hancock (27); State Street Bank (21); Bank of New England (18); Stone and Webster (16); Massachusetts General Hospital (15); New England Medical Center (15); New England Telephone (14) and Commercial Union.

The highest number of placements were in the banking industry. Graduates were placed in the following business segments: Banking Investments (21.4%); Hotels (15.2%); Retail, Food Services (15.0%); Insurance (14.1%); Transportation, Utilities (5.5%); Manufacturing, Printing (5.1%); Business Services (Advertising, Credit, Collection), (4.4%); Construction, Engineering (3.6%); Education (2.5%); Legal Services (2.8%) and Government, Public Administration (2.7%). The remaining graduates were distributed among the following businesses: hotels (2.0%); accounting and professional services (.4%); publishing, broadcasting, communications (.6%); real estate (.7%), and other (4%).

About two-thirds (65%) of these companies hired graduates in clerical positions. The remaining 35 percent found jobs as a laborer maintenance worker, salesperson, service worker, mechanic, equipment operator, health technical operator, crafts person, skilled trades; or as a manager/supervisor or as a technical operator. Few fast food jobs are included in this list. The average hourly rate of these 823 graduates was \$5.03 but only two of the 823 graduates earned the minimum wage of \$3.35 per hour. The average earned yearly for full-time work was \$10,500. The major question that is not answered by these data is the degree to which these permanent jobs offer advancement or job mobility or to what extent are the graduates placed in dead-end jobs. Spring (1987) reports that the average



wage for the Class of 1986 was forty cents higher (\$5.43/hr.) than that earned by the average graduate of the Class of 1985. Given the economically disadvantaged status of the majority of these graduates, their achievements are nonetheless quite noteworthy.

Other accomplishments under the Boston Compact include the following:

- 1) A Higher Education Information Center has been established at the Boston Public Library. Through this center, information about financial aid, Pell Grants, and the like is disseminated.
- 2) The Business Community has developed the ACCESS program. This community has raised \$9 million for the Boston Plan for Excellence in the public schools which supports the ACCESS Program and the development of innovative teaching and curricular programs in elementary, middle and high schools. The ACCESS program employs a "last dollar" approach by providing sufficient money to assure that each graduate of the Boston Public Schools will have sufficient money to attend college and to remain in college. Although these programs are administered by the Boston Foundation, Compact-affiliated universities and businesses played a major role in their development.
- 3) A Retention Consortium is operated through Simmons College. At least five area colleges and universities participate in this program.
- 4) Several colleges and universities have expanded the number of scholarships available to graduates of the Boston Public School System.
- 5) The Humphrey Center is now the coordinator for the apprenticeship program devised under the 1984 agreement with the Boston Trades Union. Interviewees for this report sense that the unions are substantially more amenable to Compact agreement at the present time, largely because of their close relationship with Mayor Flynn.





- 6) While test scores have improved over the results of 1982, and the fact there was a decline in test performance in 1985-86, this is an area in which considerably more progress must be achieved in order to realize the ultimate goals of the Compact.
- 7) In 1986, reading requirements for graduation were implemented for the first time and applied to all potential graduates of the school system.
- 8) Attendance: has improved by as much as 6.5 percent but that remains below the level desired.

However, a most serious problem remains--the staggering dropout rate of 43 percent (in the Class of 1985). Clearly, this problem has to command maximum priority and inter-agency collaboration by all actors in the system. It should be addressed through much more imaginative programs and services in order to stem the tide of unemployed youth, unprepared either for entry into the world of work or for a self-sufficient economic life.

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#### The Boston Housing Authority\*

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Educational attainment, unemployment and poverty vary immensely by census tracts and/or where people live in Boston. Not unexpectedly, residents of Boston's twenty-four family developments, formerly called housing projects, account for a

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\*This section was based on interviews with Kenneth Barnes, Outreach Coordinator for the Boston Housing Authority, and David Dance, Director of the Task Force for Blacks and Hispanics/Franklin Field Development.





disproportionate amount of adult and youth unemployment as well as inordinately high poverty rates. Family developments are also the location of a sizeable proportion of "the hard-to-reach" populations that many social agencies are attempting to target for outreach programs.

Outreach workers are located at fourteen of the twenty-four family developments in Boston. Because of budgetary constraints, only one outreach worker can be hired for each family development. The rationale for outreach workers in family developments is to have an on-site person who cannot only be an advocate for tenants but who can serve as a necessary bridge to opportunity for them. The outreach workers help tenants move into educational and training programs; help them overcome barriers for "getting in and staying in" jobs training programs, and help them understand their own responsibilities for satisfactory performance in traditional jobs.

Younger occupants of family developments tend to have an enormously high dropout rate from school and often fail to complete educational and training programs. This dropout rate is due to a number of factors including difficulties within the program, personal crises, problems with their peers, problems with instructors, and lack of day care facilities for young mothers enrolled in these programs. Not only must the outreach worker deal with problems of this nature but, in some instances, they attempt to persuade administrators of programs requiring either a high school diploma or a GED for entry to waive the absolute standard and to be somewhat more flexible so as to permit entry of some of their tenants while they are completing the educational requirement.



The Boston Housing Authority purchases slots for family development tenants in some programs. In the recent past, family development tenants have been placed in the ABCD Evening Clerical Program; Training, Inc. (for secretarial and other clerical jobs); Hitchcock Secretarial School; Dimock Community Health Center's Counselor Training Program; Control Data Institute (for word processing training); GTE-Sylvania (for computer training; however, no tenants interested in this type of work could be found); and the Heating and Air Ventilation Program.

Recruitment for participation in educational and training programs is extremely difficult. Many family development tenants feel completely neglected by the system, local and state governmental departments, the private sector, social agencies, and by economically advantaged citizens. Although many tenants articulate a need for jobs and state "I want money now," they have no conceptualization of what they would like to do and what their own job interests are. Sometimes it is virtually impossible to obtain vital information from them and to convince them of the absolute necessity for training in order to be successful in the work world. It is speculated that it is from this group of youngsters that the underground economy merchants of socially unacceptable behavior recruit their "runners and pushers." It is also theorized that the disillusionment and desperation of some teenagers are reflected in their belief that the only way to ever have anything of their own is to "have a baby." For some, "deliberately getting pregnant is a way of establishing social and personal independence in her life, and a way of establishing her own household." Unfortunately, she has not made a realistic assessment of what it costs to live, and he has understood neither the economic costs for the social or personal responsibilities of being a father. Many have not made the link between obtaining a job and keeping it. For these and other reasons, educational and job training programs must be brought into the social world of the "hard-to-reach" tenants of family developments.





Recruitment by outreach workers involves knocking on doors, holding job fairs, posting flyers in the hallways of buildings, and using newsletters to persuade tenants to visit the office of outreach workers to talk about training programs and job opportunities available to them. These techniques, as Representative Sandra Graham stated, demand outreach workers who are not afraid of family development tenants, people who can build a sense of trust quickly, and people who can convince tenants who feel and believe themselves to be outsiders that someone actually cares about their welfare and firmly believe in their rights to a better life.

Job fairs are particularly frustrating as a recruitment device. On the one hand, it is difficult to convince tenants to go outside their developments to a job fair located elsewhere. Therefore, the most successful job fairs are located within the family development. On the other hand, some "employers may not be interested in particular kids even though they are interested in the jobs." Further, some companies are not especially interested in hiring Blacks and Hispanics even though their representatives appear at job fairs." Race and class biases predispose their decisions to hire or not to hire. Subjective judgments are made of individual youngsters on the basis of where they live, on their language, or how they appear. Therefore, many youngsters from family developments are de-selected before they have an objective opportunity to be selected for a training program or for a job. The disjunction between real and perceived personal characteristics, and the culture/class gap between the employer and youth too often coalesce to the disadvantage of economically disadvantaged youth on whom so few people are willing to take a chance.

Unmistakably, when one finds that a substantial proportion of a target population cannot read or write beyond the 5th grade level, massive training is imperative in order for such individuals to become productive in an economy



changing as rapidly as that of Massachusetts. Drop-out prevention and pregnancy prevention programs must be either initiated or strengthened in order to address the compelling needs of this population. Yet, these and other programs for family development tenants are not well-financed.

Financial Support. Funds for BHA programs are obtained from a variety of sources. The State Executive Office of Community Development awards the BHA some \$2 million for the development of visible tenant organizations. Of that amount, \$300,000 is allocated for the outreach and recruitment system. Another \$600,000 goes for Tenants United for Public Housing Press. An unspecified sum is allocated for child care, youth care, skills training and development, and adult education. Some funds are also received from Kristin McCormack's office (The Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services) through its JTPA allocations, and some funds are allocated from Block Grants. For instance, because of the close relationship between City Councilman Charles Yancy and the Franklin Field Development, that Development received a Block Grant of \$50,000 in 1985 and another of \$47,000 in 1986 -- money used to help defray the costs of its youth programs and to facilitate community involvement in identifying the special needs of that community.

The Franklin Field Development has hired a youth coordinator whose responsibilities include jobs referrals and building recreational opportunities as a means of reaching "kids at risk." In September 1986, a Youth Services Center Coordinator and a Youth Jobs Coordinator were to have been hired so that efforts to sustain job search activities could be strengthened.

During the 1986 Summer, the Franklin Development Youth program was oriented to finding jobs for approximately 60 to 80 youth. Monies from the Block Grant enabled that office to hire six counselors from the Franklin Field Development





to work on this project. Some jobs were also obtained from the Boston Community Schools Youth Clean-up Corps.

Arrangements had been made by July 1986 for some 24 youngsters from the Franklin Field Development to receive "after-school" jobs in four different community agencies and other locales. These jobs were to have been supplemented by career counseling, training in life skills, and training in on-the-job expectations. Outreach personnel enthusiastically support the jobs after school program and agree that it should be expanded in order to provide this type of experience for a much larger number of youngsters who reside in family developments.

Although recommendations will follow in the last section of this study, it should be stated at this point that understaffing is one of the major problems confronting persons involved in outreach initiatives. Nowhere is this situation more apparent than in the situation of outreach workers for family developments. At the Franklin Field Development, for instance, the staff to youth ratio is an appalling 1:576. Even with the enormity of their tasks, the evidence shows that family developments do have a number of skilled and dedicated outreach workers who are attempting to push youthful "outsiders" into the mainstream of education and employment opportunity.





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Action for Boston

Community Development\*

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Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) came into existence in 1965. It is supported by public and private funds. Although a multi-service organization, a major component of its over-all operations is the summer employment program for young people. The major objectives of its youth programs are fostering educational attainment of the economically and educationally disadvantaged, and increasing the employability of youngsters between the ages of 14 and 21.

Its major youth program is the Summer Youth and Training Program (SYTP) which is also known as SUMMERWORKS. This program emerged from the Neighborhood Youth Corps previously known as the Summer Youth Program which was also known as Youth Employment Services and Support (YESS) program.

### SUMMERWORKS

This is a city-wide summer training and employment program that encompasses youngsters from 17 neighborhoods in the city of Boston.

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\*This description is based upon interviews with Henry Smith, Director of Training and Carol McCarthy, Director of SUMMERWORKS of ABCD, and an analysis of literature provided by Henry Smith.



Table 4. Poverty Income Related to Family Size,  
ABCD Program Participants, 1986

Family Size	Poverty Income Level in \$
1	5,250
2	7,650
3	10,510
4	12,970
5	15,300
6	17,900
More than 6	an additional \$2,600/each person

Source: Henry Smith, Director of Training, Action for Boston Community Development





Recruitment. To be eligible for Summerworks, the youth must be a Boston resident between the ages of 14 and 21 who meets established poverty guidelines. According to these guidelines, poverty income is tied to the size of the family (See Table 4)

Eligibility must be substantiated; that is to say, a prospective participant must prove that he/she meets age requirements, is a resident of Boston and his/her family income falls within allowable limits. A significant proportion of the applicants to this program results from PIC recruiters in the schools. However, ABCD is beginning to develop its own networks of 100 recruitment sites, including Dorchester House and other public agencies.

Program Description. The focus of the SUMMERWORKS program is on life management skills for "youth at risk." Young people are taught, among other things, how to complete a job application, interview techniques and methods of building self-confidence. Training in basic educational skills is also provided. Included in the overall SUMMERWORKS program are other components such as Boston Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC), 14 enrichment programs, activities for 50 multi-disabled youngsters and 31 hearing-impaired persons. Those youth involved in the BYCC devote their time to beautification, landscaping, restoration of historic sites and graveyards. Twenty percent of their time must be spent on academic activity germane to their work (e.g., plant life, testing for lead in the soil, urban gardening).

The enrichment programs are conducted by 14 agencies, all of which include a work component. Newer programs are the Metropolitan Indochinese Adolescent Services (MIAS); Hispanic, La Alianza Hispana, La-Ali (Dudley Street in Roxbury which focuses on English as a Second Language); and We-Talk-A Touch of Class (WTOC) which is working on the problem of teen pregnancy.



All SUMMERWORKS programs are seven weeks in length, and youth are paid \$3.55 per hour. The work schedule calls for 30 hours per week. All youngsters have counselors who advise them on substance abuse, life-saving skills, etc.

Placements. Coordinators of the 15 Area Planning Coordinating Councils (APACs) are trained to provide placement services. Each APAC develops its own set of criteria for jobs and job types. However, the most salient criterion is that the youth must come from "a family in need of services." The first attempt is to place the youngsters in a "home agency" or an agency that is closest to their place of residence. All youngsters are permitted to select their own jobs, and each APAC is required to give youth their first or second choice of jobs. More than 200 youth are placed in the best downtown sites including the Office of Internal Revenue Service, the State House, the Mayor's Office, all government and state agencies and in the Governor's Office.

Types of Jobs. The types of jobs most frequently found are in/as:

1. Day Care Centers (Depend heavily upon ABCD youth for their operations. Youth assigned to day care centers are required to take a minimum of one week's training in early childhood development.)
2. Computer literacy programs
3. Clerical jobs, graphic arts
4. BHA repair and maintenance crews
5. Library aides (stocking and cataloguing)
6. Hospitals (providing assistance in laboratories, etc.)
7. Homes for the Elderly (as patients' escorts)





## The Summer Training and Employment Program--STEP

This program was developed by public and private ventures (PPV) with the assistance and support of the Ford Foundation and is jointly funded through the SUMMERWORKS Program. It is an experimental program oriented to eighth graders who are at risk. It is a longitudinal program designed to ascertain the impact or the effect of educational enrichment, support services and training on the retention and employability of youth. During 1985-86, some 1300 "at risk" youngsters were identified but only 300 could be selected for participation in the program. These 300 were equally divided between a control group of 150 youngsters and a treatment group of 150 youth. Those in the control group are provided a regular work experience without the support and training given those in the treatment group. Member of the treatment group are placed at Boston University, the University of Massachusetts/Boston and Northeastern University. They receive 90 hours of remediation; 90 hours of work experience on the college campus; 18 hours of life planning skills (sex education, pregnancy prevention, and "saying no" to drugs and pre-marital sex). Again, the central question being tested is: "If youth are given remediation, work experience and life planning instruction, will they stay in school through high school graduation?" These two groups will be followed by PPV until 1990, the year they should be graduating from high school. Participants in both groups are required to work 30 hours per week for seven weeks at \$3.55 per hour.

Characteristics of Program Participants. Program participants are equally divided between the sexes. Thirty percent are BHA residents; 6 percent were referred from the Juvenile Justice System; 4 percent are disabled; 74 percent are from a one-parent family; 21 percent are from a two-parent family, and 5 percent are classified as other.





Participants in the regular SUMMERWORKS programs have the following characteristics:

Females	52%
Males	48%
14-15 year olds	64%
16 yrs. and above	36%
Black	42%
Hispanic	26%
White	22%
Asian	11%
American Indian	1%
In-School	95%
Out-of-School	5%

Financial Support of SUMMERWORKS Programs. Financial support for ABCD programs has been influenced predominantly by the amount of federal dollars allocated for social services. In turn, these fluctuations have determined the number of youth who could be assisted by ABCD. In 1972, in the waning days of the Nixon Administration, ABCD was able to provide assistance to 1,700 youngsters. However, with increasing federal monies appropriated to ameliorate social problems, ABCD reached a height of 9,200 youth served through its programs. In 1986, only 2,500 youth were involved in ABCD programs. That was due to the fact that the ABCD budget had dropped from about \$3 million in 1985 to \$2.3 million in 1986. (In 1987, the FY 88 budget was further reduced to \$1.7 millions and approximately 1,450 youth or less were being served). The lion's share of ABCD monies are received from the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services under Title IIB of JTPA. Other



support is provided by Ford Foundation. It is the continually declining federal dollars and the shortfalls in financial support from the City and State that have such a devastating impact on ABCD's capacity to provide the type of services that staff members recognize as needed and warranted in order to reduce the problems of school drop-outs, youth unemployment and teen pregnancy.

Problems. The support for ABCD is declining in part because it is not recognized as a "prevention program." ABCD maintains that failure is due to the support systems it makes available to youth for the first time in their lives. Yet, it is the only program in the City that provides a battery of services to 14 year olds (helping them with PSATs, college preparation, and how to obtain financial aid and summer jobs). There is a great fear that the ABCD programs will be swallowed up, so to speak, by the Boston Community Schools under the rationalization that ABCD duplicates services provided by the Boston Community Schools. There is also a widespread belief among agencies like ABCD that the federal government is slowly attempting to dismantle summer programs for youth and that drastic budgetary cutbacks confirm that belief. Budgetary reductions inevitably mean insufficient funding to meet even a modest increase in the minimum wage offered youth.

There are also problems with the demand by the State for ABCD to monitor more than it already does in order to substantiate the fact that its programs are eligible for support. The self-declaration program is seriously questioned by the State. ABCD insists that very few of its youth are unqualified or that very few qualified youth slip through the cracks.

The demand for participation greatly exceeds the number of youth who can be supported by present financial outlays. That ipso facto calls into serious question assertions that "jobs are going begging" for youth in Boston. The truth of such statements depends upon the racial and class identification of the youthful job seeker.





Successes. It is often difficult to make claims about the success of a program without measurable, quantifiable data. ABCD states that measurable data will be made available from the STEP program and that the BYCC program is also measurable. ABCD also knows that it has successfully placed, without incident and with tremendous success, several hundred young people in jobs that were meaningful and fulfilling of program expectations. Qualitatively, ABCD can, and does in fact, identify several Bostonians in prominent public and private businesses today who are graduates of its summer programs. Its goal is to continue to provide a broad array of services to "youth at risk," and it is recognized that, given the fact of rapidly shrinking federal dollars, greater financial support from the private sector will be necessary in the immediate future.



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## Jobs for Youth\*

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We are targeting the "hard-to-reach" and the "hard-to-place" in all of our programs

Patricia Pickett, Director

Jobs For Youth

Jobs for Youth is a non-profit organization, established in 1976, to provide educational and employability services to young people in need of special attention. The primary goals of Jobs for Youth are to: provide long-term employability for the most difficult to serve and the hardest to place youth population; help young drop-outs obtain a GED certificate; teach them the process of problem-solving so that they can deal with even the most routine issue in a socially acceptable manner; and, ultimately, make them economically productive citizens able to assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

The target population consists of the 16-21 year old school drop-outs who live in either Boston or Cambridge. Those young people who participate in the Jobs For Youth (JFY) programs contracted with the City of Boston must meet eligibility requirements dictated by federal and City grants. Specifically, they must be from families whose annual income is at the poverty level. The 1986 budget for JFY was approximately \$600,000, which represented a slight increase over the 1985 budget.

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\*Information for this discussion was obtained through interviews with Patricia Pickett, Director of Jobs For Youth, and from literature provided by her office.



Approximately 75 percent of that amount is obtained through private funding -- foundations, corporations, United Way -- that is, from about 90 different sources of private grants. The remaining 25 percent of its annual budget comes from City and State sources, especially for JFY educational programs. JFY has a \$30,000 performance-based contract from the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services to help finance its education and training program. In 1985, the City awarded a \$40,000 grant for the same purposes.

The JFY program encompasses education and employment training, including a competency-based GED certificate program whose curriculum is marketed nationally, counseling and jobs placement services.

Employability Training. Employability training for those persons interested in education includes three-hour workshops of interviews and four individual-employability sessions (one-on-one) of one hour each. The focus of the workshop interviews is on "being able to communicate," the process of interviewing, and how to apply for a job. Individuals must be involved in six to eight one-on-one sessions before they are ready to move out for a job interview. The foci and techniques employed in these sessions include: (1) recognizing the skills one already possesses; (2) understanding behavior that is not accepted in the workplace but which may be acceptable in one's own social milieu; (3) understanding job expectations from employers (including learning to say "thank you" or to be courteous to one another, reasons for not "wearing a hat while inside a room," dress codes, the demand for punctuality, use of time, dependability); (4) problem-solving; (5) facing problems likely to be encountered in the workplace; and (6) using communications techniques such as role-playing, asking questions, use of videos and "brain-storming" on such issues as "Why work?" or "Why was I fired." Socialization into normative behavior is facilitated, and trainees learn to confront their own





rationalizations about work experience, social interaction on the jobs, relationships with supervisors and the kinds of "cop-outs" most often heard among persons who have lost their jobs (e.g., "My supervisor did not like me." "I was fired because I'm black.")

Education. Classes are three hours in length and are offered three times per day: morning, afternoon and evening. (Evening classes tend to be comprised of older, more serious youth, many of whom are already holding full-time jobs). Each class can accommodate 12 youth; however, seldom are there more than 8 persons per class. Classes are competency-based. Computer-assisted instruction is provided depending upon the time necessary for the competencies and to pass the GED (normally, from three months to two years). There is also a Competency Achievement Program (CAP) for those with basic skills under the seventh grade level who wish to work toward admission into the GED certificate program.

Job Placement. After youth have completed the employability training unit and are deemed "job ready," the vocational counselor examines the job order board, selects a few jobs and discusses job possibilities and requirements with the trainees. An attempt is made here to match the youth and available jobs. The vocation counselor calls the employers and makes the appointment for the new applicant. It is then up to the youth to make a good presentation of self and "sell oneself" to the employer. After one week on the job, the employer representative telephones JFY and provides feedback on the progress of the youth referred by JFY. After one month, JFY begins its follow-up services, and the youth is required to remain in contact with the JFY vocation counselor. Individual conferences are held with businesses to help sensitize supervisors on how to work with young persons referred by JFY.

Types of Jobs. Youth who complete the employability training program are usually placed in the following types of jobs located in 500 to 600 businesses:









with the BHA, the Division of Social Services, health centers, hospitals with adolescent centers, school counselors, ABCD, the Urban League and alternative education program employees are also sources of youth for the JFY program. In addition, volunteer outreach internees from Northeastern University, and some who double as outreach workers and work study students on their "co-op projects" are an important source of recruiters. Inasmuch as outreach is a full-time effort, and even though the latter are especially important when finances preclude having a full corps of outreach workers, much more funding is needed to expand this service delivery component.

Characteristics of Participants. Sixty percent are males and 40 percent are females. Most of the participants are from the Dorchester neighborhoods. In racial terms, 84 percent are Black, whites and Hispanics each comprise from 9-13 percent of the total number and Asians constitute less than one percent of all program participants. JFY participants are economically or educationally disadvantaged or both.

Problems. Problems encountered concern outreach, staffing shortages and needs for additional sources of funding. JFY reports urgent needs for additional staff, especially persons trained in personal counseling and persons who can assist the organization in connecting parenting teens to the work situation. JFY works with a difficult population. The majority of its youth are unable to obtain a job due to their lack of skills, lack of understanding of "what it takes to get a job," their poor self-image and their lack of experience with personal success. Even though JFY serves about 700 youth annually, additional funding would enable the organization to broaden the scope of its training and to serve a larger number of "youth at risk" who are in dire need of the full range of services provided by JFY.

Successes. JFY personnel feel that this organization is quite successful in meeting its established goals each year. As stated above, about 700 youth are



annually served. About one-half of that number take advantage of educational services, which JFY has been advocating more than employment per se recently. Two hundred-fifty to 300 take advantage of the job placement services each year. Some persons obtain jobs independently of the placement services offered by JFY.

In 1986, a Youth Business Initiative was established. This program is modeled after similar business initiatives in England. It is funded by grants from Ford Foundation, American Express and other major corporations. The first group of participants in this program entered in January 1986; however, the program is expected to continually expand. This program targets economically disadvantaged 18-25 year olds who are interested in learning how to establish business enterprises of their own. They may borrow up to \$2,000 as start-up money.

Their training includes 12 workshops on business ventures, the development of a business plan and business management. As of the 1986 interview, five persons had established businesses and an additional 45 were planned to be in operation by 1987.

Finally, JFY is attempting to develop a mentoring program for young males. The problem experienced here is the difficulty in identifying persons "to buy into the program."



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The Urban League of  
Eastern Massachusetts\*

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For more than two decades, the National Urban League has administered youth training and employment programs. At the local level, the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts administers two youth-oriented programs and had planned to initiate two additional programs by the Fall of 1986.

One of its on-going programs is the MBTA Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which was begun in October 1985. By agreement with the MBTA, the Urban League selects youth for vocational counseling, educational preparation (training in basic skills) and refers them to the MBTA for possible jobs. Most of the participants are young Black males. While no data were provided during the interview, the impression was given that this program is relatively small, and its success has yet to be measured.

A second on-going program involving youth is the Job Placement Service. Although some short-term training is provided, this program operates essentially as a referral service. No data were available as to the characteristics of the participants or the number of persons referred and to whom they were referred. No data were available as to follow-up in order to make some determination of the success of the program.

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\*This section is based primarily upon an interview with Elaine Gross, Vice President for Program, Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts.





A Male Responsibility Initiative was supposed to have been in place by Fall of 1986. This program was funded as a pregnancy-prevention effort. It involves intensive week-end workshops during which attention is devoted to values clarification, sex education and decision-making. Plans called for the development of weekly sessions involving discussions between young people and community leaders interested in the issue of pregnancy-prevention.

The Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts also planned the development of a mentoring program oriented toward young fathers in their early teens and up to the age of 20. Greek Letter Organizations assumed responsibility for conducting workshops with young men during which the focus was on assumption of responsibilities of fatherhood, responsibilities toward children and the child's mother, appropriate behavior and job placement. It was anticipated that recruitment into this program would be extremely difficult; therefore, participants were expected to be referred by the courts and from other programs.

Leaders of the Urban League argue that in order for youth to be successful, any programmatic initiatives would have to be placed in the context of a Comprehensive Support System of Services. This system encompasses motivation, discipline, heightening awareness of different social and behavioral norms other than those to which participating youth are accustomed, behavior modifications, and the marketing of youth to employers. Successful marketing must overcome the negative images that so many employers have of youth, especially of Black youth.



## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT POLICY ISSUES

One of the major observations of this study is that, although there are probably hundreds of agencies in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts involved in outreach programs and although the State claims to annually spend several million dollars on youth-related programs, there is still no well-coordinated youth employment policy. In this regard, the State is not distinguishable from the federal government since no claim can be supported for the existence of a well-defined youth employment policy at either level. Nor can the City defend claims, if it so desired, to a cohesive policy for youth employment that generates strategies to attain the goal of economic self-sufficiency for distressed youth.

Decentralization of authority, autonomy of program operations and local control over the allocation of resources can be easily justified. However, without coordination, coherence in policy formulation and implementation of relevant decisions, the goal of full employment of our nation's youth cannot be attained. In Massachusetts, efforts are underway to establish such a policy but to date those efforts have not produced adequate results. Many pieces of a youth policy exist at the State and municipal levels. They are found, for example, in employment and training policy, in education, labor, human services, jobs and community services. But what is the interrelationship between all these sectors? Where do they intersect, and what is the structure that binds them together in ways that render the most effective delivery of services to youth in need? Where is the coordination between all governmental levels and inter-departmental structures that is necessary for coherence? These pieces remain separate and apart largely because of the innumerable actors, departments and agencies involved. Many have strong opinions as to what is workable and what strategies are dysfunctional, and several are hindered by the ultimate priority of protecting their own turf. This sense of





territoriality is a needless impediment to the construction of a coherent youth employment policy. When the tendency is to view a problem exclusively in terms of the perspectives and philosophy dominant within one's own agency or administrative unit or from the vantage points of field operations only, the resulting policy is likely to be fragmented. Without a holistic perspective, patterns and interrelationships of contributing parts may not be fully understood. Incumbents of important positions may not be willing to subordinate their individual autonomy over a single agency or department for the achievement of an overarching goal. At this point, enlightened, strong, persuasive and imaginative political acumen and effective leadership is crucial.

A cohesive youth employment policy can be formulated and implemented through political and public will to solve the problem. It can be accomplished through sound leadership with determination to appoint people who can devote their time to thinking about the most effective ways to address the youth unemployment problem, to developing strategies, to planning courses of action germane to the strategies and to justifying the funding requisite for full implementation of such policies.

Adequate funding is crucial for the implementation of a cohesive policy that will serve the needs of our young people, as well as our social, political and economic institutions, and result in greater employability among the young. Evidence has been presented here that shows systematic retrenchment in federal dollars, a steady retreat of the federal government from high level support for youth employment programs and the failure of the State and the City of Boston to compensate adequately for the loss of federal funds. Federal decisions to devolve increasing responsibilities for youth employment to the states and the proclivities of state and municipal governments to place a greater share of the responsibility for rendering youth employable on the private sector will not absolve either of their



own individual responsibilities to substantially reduce if not totally eradicate this problem. It is up to elected officials to the U.S. Congress to exercise their own power and authority to forge policy formulation and to provide that funding or support to the states that will result in more jobs for teenagers. It is the authority and duty of elected officials at the state and municipal levels, in collaboration with business and industry, to find creative ways to generate funds that will assure that policies are not documents without consistent implementability. It is their collective responsibility to guarantee that those young people who meet job requirements and expectations will be able to work. Evidence has been presented here which reveals significant progress in educating, training and employing young people. By the same token, numerous inadequacies in the system as it presently operates are also quite evident. Many needs are not being met, irrespective of the fact that the agencies described are indeed making a valient effort to reduce the number of "youth at risk" and to promote economic self-sufficiency among youth in the City of Boston and the Commonwealth. What, then, are those needs? Some are outlined below:

1. A most important assumption is that the employability of our youth must be driven by the desire to provide the best type of education and training that the City and the State can offer. This assumption is predicated on necessity of inter-governmental and inter-agency departments to raise education, training and employment to the highest priority. This means both role clarification or a responsible division of labor and coordinated strategies by all relevant actors.

Education as preparation for the world of work cannot be reserved for the senior high school years. Preparation not only involves mastering basic skills and learning how to think, it encompasses a total mind set





that includes a configuration of psychological traits, habits, orientation toward society, responsibilities toward self, social institutions and other members within one's social system, as well as positive attitudes about how one relates to others.

It is almost futile to wait until the last years of secondary school training to make the initial discovery that Johnny and Sue cannot perform basic skills functions, that they are functionally illiterate and/or that they have become "sudden behavioral problems." The symptoms of these conditions could have been and ought to be discovered much earlier in life so that remediation and other interventions could be initiated as prevention measures. In effect, careful monitoring of a youngster's progress (e.g., educational attainment, self-esteem, interpersonal behavioral patterns) must begin at home but if parents do not exercise prior responsibility because they do not want to or because of inadequate parenting skills, schools, as an important socializing and educating agency, must assume the duties of *loco parentis*.

All that is known about the advanced skills demanded by a high technology economy instructs us that schools must be rigorous in their educational training and expectations of and from students. Schools must discontinue unbridled permissiveness in the curricula offered. Teachers should demand more of students and be sensitive to their needs. It is quite evident that inadequacies in educational preparation impede transition from school to work, and that lack of work generates innumerable social problems. Neither the State nor the City can afford the perpetuation of such deficiencies. The future demands well-educated people. Importantly, it is a mistake and it is not in the best interest of the State and City to either exclude or restrict minorities from full and equal





participation in vocational and technical education training programs. Further, labor unions in Massachusetts, which have a long history of hostility to Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities, must be persuaded to open up opportunities for training and employment of minority youth. Now is the time for the Governor and the Mayor of such cities as Boston, Springfield, Worcester, Lawrence, Lowell and Fall River, as well as others in the Commonwealth, to exercise forthright leadership and decisiveness in this area so that Blacks, Latinos and Asians will share in the economic boom of the State, cities and towns. Now is the time to move from the rhetoric of "opportunity for all" to concrete action which realizes that goal!

2. Job creation is vital (Hahn and Lerman, 1985). A major claim in Massachusetts is that the state has attained full employment. However, that economic boom, which governmental officials at State and municipal levels are prone to publicize, has not benefitted a significant number of young people, especially those from the Black and Latino populations. They have the highest unemployment rates, the highest drop-out rates and the lowest labor force participation rates. In less statistical and more personal terms, they feel the emotional trauma resulting from joblessness and lack of financial resources to foster the kind of personal independence that enables them to be productive citizens. Not only is job creation imperative but the elimination of stereotyping in perceptions of minority youth of too many key personnel in business and industry is the sine qua non for moving them into the labor market.



Job expansion is necessary in the public and private sectors ( Hahn and Lerman, 1985). The private sector in Boston claims that it has jobs "going begging;" however, there is some evidence that this failure to fill vacant positions is not due solely to the lack of job applicants but to applicants who are of the "desired race." Racism notwithstanding, the data showing characteristics of school drop-outs underscore a compelling urgency for adequate educational and training programs not only within the school system but for their expansion in agencies devoted to reaching the "out-of-school" youngsters. This is no time to expend energies criticizing programs designed to connect schooling, educational attainment and first choice on jobs. The most urgent need is to expand financial and human services/resources support for a whole range of programs that will reach all types of youngsters -- the underprepared, the better-prepared, the highly motivated and the under-motivated -- and offer the best type of education and training. All youngsters need to know how to make connections in the work world. Those without social networks, primarily those youngsters from minority groups, need assistance in this endeavor even as jobs are expanded.

One component of a coherent policy should, then, be directed toward job creation, job expansion and the increased support for those agencies that prepare "out-of-school" youngsters to meet employment requirements. Another assumption of a youth employment policy in Massachusetts is one that embraces the notion that fulfillment of job requirements in this State will be based on raising minimum educational requisites. In other words, just as we see that 80 percent of the jobs in the State now require a minimum of a high school diploma, the proportion requiring a college degree will also rise. Consequently, it is imperative to





construct a policy that moves beyond lower-order training expectations to one driven by preparing people for current and future employment needs. That means expanding opportunity for training in community and four-year colleges and cooperation with post-secondary institutions in the planning and implementation of such policies.

3. Operationally, there is a need for more people who can make connections with teenagers. Specifically, the need for outreach workers and recruiters has never been more critical than it is at this juncture in the economy of the City of Boston and of the State itself. There is a plethora of evidence gleaned from persons currently employed at State and municipal levels in Massachusetts to attest to the viability and success of outreach workers and recruiters. The need is not only for a larger cadre of such dedicated workers but for persons of all races to serve in these roles. Outreach workers must be able first to understand their clients, their social worlds, the nature of their experiences and their unspoken goals, and they must be able to communicate with and must be trusted by their clients.
4. Job Placement should be another cornerstone of a cohesive youth employment policy (Hahn and Lerman, 1985). We have learned a great deal from the experiences of agencies that operate education, training and placement programs such as ABCD, Jobs for Youth and the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts. These agencies provide an important job search function; they match clients with employers and provide crucial follow-up services to facilitate job retention and upward mobility. They can expand sensitivity training among employers that may reduce strains with their employees. It is in the best interest of the nation, the



State and the City to expand and support such agencies so that the needs of the individual employers and the citizenry can be fulfilled.

5. Infra-structure development is another important element in job expansion, education, training and employment. Representative Sandra Graham spoke eloquently about the role that businesses and the Church can and must play in the Black Community. Without question, the need for entrepreneurial development within minority communities, sustained by a multi-cultural population, is essential. There are many historical antecedents to the idea of using business infra-structure within an ethnic community as an instrument for economic, political and educational empowerment. However, efforts to expand economic ventures must be supported in minority group communities as they have been and are in other communities. Black, Hispanic and Asian entrepreneurs need capitalization and trust in their competence as much as other groups more easily obtain and are presumed to possess. Institutional infra-structure also means that family structure has to be strengthened. If no more than for that reason alone, programs to support pregnant and parenting teens should be expanded.

5. In addition to the above recommendations and considerations, the formulation and implementation of a coherent youth employment policy should encompass such specifics as the following:

- a. An expanded "in-school" jobs program that not only offers work experiences but strengthens socialization for work world requirements.
- b. Structural rearrangements and/or expanded commitments with or from area colleges and universities to help reduce the drop-out problem in the public schools of the larger cities. Expanded





programs might include the use of college and university students as tutors for high school students and as organizers of sessions on the art of test-taking; services to hard-to-reach high school students such as educational hotlines, workshops, visits to educational, cultural, and business institutions; the utilization of mentors and role models in creative ways as an inducement to remain in school and to pursue post-secondary education.

- c. A major expansion of day-care services for teen parents who want to complete their high school education, work or pursue post-secondary education. This effort requires greater cooperation between State and municipal governments business and industry, high schools and institutions of higher education.
- d. Immediate enforcement of anti-discrimination policies throughout the State so that youngsters will be able to observe people of all racial groups employed in a greater diversity of jobs in the public and private sectors and be encouraged to emulate their accomplishments.
- e. The strongest possible commitment to equity, fairness, accountability and responsibility in the implementation of all programs designed to improve the status of youth in Boston and throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The problem of youth unemployment is at a crisis state for many groups in the nation. It is this writer's contention that the nation's economic, educational and social institutions will be strengthened if, indeed, a cohesive youth employment policy is promulgated and implemented. Otherwise, we stand to pay the price for persistent and vexatious social problems, personal disenchantment or disillusionment among those on whom so much of the nation's future depends.





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